اِنَّ هٰذَا الْقُرْاٰنَ يَهْدِيْ لِلَّتِيْ هِيَ اَقْوَمُ وَيُبَشِّرُ الْمُؤْمِنِيْنَ الَّذِيْنَ يَعْمَلُوْنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ اَنَّ لَهُمْ اَجْرًا كَبِيْرًا ۙ

Quran English Translation and Tafseer
Sayyid Abul Ala Mawdudi

Surah 21 Al-Anbiya

سُوْرَةُ الْاَنْبِيَآءِ مَكِّيَّةٌ

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِيْمِ

(In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate)

اِقْتَرَبَ لِلنَّاسِ حِسَابُهُمْ وَهُمْ فِيْ غَفْلَةٍ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ۝١

(21-1) The time of people's reckoning has drawn near, [1] and yet they turn aside in heedlessness. [2]

(1) “Draws near for mankind their reckoning”: the time of Resurrection. This is to warn the people that the time of Resurrection when they will have to appear before their Lord to render their accounts is not far. This was because the coming of the Prophet (peace be upon him) was a sign and a clear evidence of the fact that mankind had entered into the last stage of its history. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has himself explained it by holding out two of his adjoining fingers and said: I have been sent at a time which joins to the time of Resurrection just as these two fingers adjoin. By this he meant to say: No other Prophet is coming between me and the Resurrection. Therefore mend your ways now, for after me no guide is coming with good news and warning.

(2) That is, they do not pay heed to any warning nor reflect on their end nor listen to the admonition of the Messenger.

مَا يَ ٰٓاِتِهِم مِّن ذِكۡرٍ مِّن رَّبِّهِم مُّحۡدَثٍ اِلَّا اسۡتَمَعُوۡهُ وَهُمۡ يَلۡعَبُوۡنَ ۙ﴿۲﴾

(21-2) Whenever any fresh admonition [3] comes to them from their Lord they barely heed it and remain immersed in play, [4]

(3) "New revelation": A new Surah of the Quran.

(4) The words of the original text may also be interpreted as: They do not take life seriously but treat it as a sport and a joke.

لَاهِيَةً قُلُوۡبُهُمۡ ؕ وَاَسَرُّوا النَّجۡوَى ۖ الَّذِيۡنَ ظَلَمُوۡا ۫ هَلۡ هٰذَاۤ اِلَّا بَشَرٌ مِّثۡلُكُمۡ ۚ اَفَتَاۡتُوۡنَ السِّحۡرَ وَاَنۡتُمۡ تُبۡصِرُوۡنَ ﴿۳﴾

(21-3) their hearts being set on other concerns. The wrong-doers whisper to one another: "This person is no more than a mortal like yourselves. Will you, then, be enchanted by sorcery while you see?" [5]

(5) This may also be translated as: What, are you then being ensnared by his magic? The disbelievers, who were the chiefs of Makkah, whispered to one another to this effect: Anyhow this man cannot be a Prophet because he is a human being like us and eats and drinks and has wife and children like us. We see nothing unusual about him that might distinguish him from us and make him worthy of the office of Prophethood. We, however, admit that there is some magic in his talk and personality. That is why anyone who listens to him or goes near Him is charmed. Therefore, the best thing for you is not to listen to him at all, nor go near him, for listening to him or going near him will only be involving yourselves intentionally in his snare.

The reason why they accused the Prophet (peace be upon him) of practicing magic was that even his antagonists were charmed by his personality when they met him. Muhammad bin Ishaq (152 A.H.) says: Once Utbah bin Rabiah, the father-in-law of Abu Sufyan, said to the chiefs that he wanted to see Muhammad and

give him counsel. They said: We have full confidence in you. You may go and have a talk with him. Accordingly, he went to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and said: Dear nephew, you know that you were held in great honor here before this and you belong to a noble family. Why have you then brought this affliction to your people? You have caused discard among them. You consider your people to be fools. You speak ill of their religion and deities, and you declare their deceased forefathers to be disbelievers. My dear nephew, if your object is to become a rich man, we can give you so much wealth that you will become the richest man among us. If you are seeking a high rank, we will make you our chief, even our king, if you so like. But if you are suffering from a mental illness which makes you see illusions, we will have you treated by the best physicians. He went on talking in this strain and the Prophet (peace be upon him) remained silent. When he was done talking, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Abul Walid, have you had your say or do you want to say anything more? He replied that he had said what he had to say. Then the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Now listen to me. And he began to recite Surah Ha-Mim-Sajdah after Bismillah and Utbah listened to him as if he had been charmed. When the Prophet (peace be upon him) came to (Ayat 38), he fell down in prostration. Then raising his head, he said: O Abul Walid, I have said whatever I had to say, and you have heard it. Now I have nothing more to say. After this Utbah walked back towards the chiefs who perceived him to be a changed man and remarked: By God, his face shows that he is not the same man that he was when he went from here. When he came to them, they asked: What has been the result of your mission? He answered: By God, today I have heard a thing the like of which I had never heard before. By Allah! It is not poetry nor sorcery nor divination. O people of Quraish, I advise you to leave him to himself. From what I have heard from him, I conclude that his message is going to bring about a great revolution here. If the Arabs overcome him, you will stand absolved from the charge of murdering your own brother, and if he overpowers the Arabs, his sovereignty will be your own sovereignty and his honor your own honor. The people answered: By God, you too, O Abul Walid, have been charmed by him. To this he replied: I have expressed my opinion. Now it is for you to

accept or reject it. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 313-314). Baihaqi, in his narration of the above event, makes this addition: When the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited (Ayat 13): If they turn away from your message, say to them, I have warned you of the coming of a thunderbolt like the thunderbolt that visited the Aad and the Thamud, Utbah placed his hand on the mouth of the Prophet (peace be upon him), saying: For God's sake, have mercy on your own people.

In this connection, ibn Ishaq has cited another event. Once a man from the clan of Arash came to Makkah with some camels and Abu Jahl bought them. When he demanded their price, he put him off by lame excuses. At last the man came to the Sanctuary of the Kabah and began to bewail publicly the dishonesty of Abu Jahl. The Prophet (peace be upon him) was also sitting in a corner of the Sanctuary. The chiefs of the Quraish said to the man: We cannot help you in any way in this matter; look, there is a man sitting: go to him and he will get you your money. Accordingly, the Arashi went towards the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the chiefs began to whisper jokingly: Today there will be great fun. When the man expressed his complaint before the Prophet (peace be upon him), he at once stood up and accompanied him to the house of Abu Jahl, followed by an informer of the chiefs. The Prophet (peace be upon him) knocked at Abu Jahl's door, who asked from inside: Who is there? He answered: Muhammad. Hearing this, he at once came out and the Prophet (peace be upon him) said to him: Pay this man his dues. Abu Jahl went in without uttering a word, brought the price of the camels and paid the man. At this the informer ran back to the Quraish and told them the whole story and said: By God, today I have seen something which I had never seen before. When Abu Jahl came out, Muhammad asked him to pay the dues, and he obeyed him as if he were spell bound. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 29-30).

It was this charm of the personality, character and words of the Prophet (peace be upon him) which these people considered to be the effects of charm and warned the people not to go near him for fear of his magic.

قٰلَ رَبِّیۡ یَعۡلَمُ الۡقَوۡلَ فِی السَّمَآءِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ ۟ وَ ہُوَ السَّمِیۡعُ الۡعَلِیۡمُ ۴

(21-4) He said: "My Lord knows well all that is spoken in the heavens and the earth. He is All-Hearing, All- Knowing." (6)

(6) This was the answer of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to their false propaganda and whispering campaign. Instead of giving a tit for tat answer, he said: My Lord will deal with you for He hears everything and knows everything.

بَلۡ قَالُوۡۤا اَضۡغَاثُ اَحۡلَامٍۭ بَلِ افۡتَرٰىہُ بَلۡ ہُوَ شَاعِرٌ ۚ فَلۡیَاۡتِنَا بِاٰیَۃٍ کَمَاۤ اُرۡسِلَ الۡاَوَّلُوۡنَ ۵

(21-5) They say: "Nay, these are confused dreams; nay, he has forged it; nay, he is a poet. (7) So let him bring us a sign, even as the Messengers of the past were sent with signs."

(7) The background of this verse is this: When the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) started gaining adherents, the chiefs of Makkah decided among themselves to start a propaganda campaign to counteract it. For this purpose they decided that every visitor to Makkah for pilgrimage should be approached and his mind so poisoned against the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he does not even go near and listen to him. Though this campaign continued throughout the year, in the pilgrimage season specially a large number of men were deputed to go to the tents of the pilgrims to warn them to beware of the Prophet (peace be upon him). Different sorts of things were said against the Prophet (peace be upon him) during these talks. Sometimes it was said that he was a sorcerer or that he had fabricated the Quran by himself but attributed it to Allah. Some would say that his revelations were the words of an insane person and a bundle of incoherent ideas. Others would say that these were ordinary poetic ideas which were being dubbed as the words of Allah. All they wanted to do was to poison the minds of the visitors irrespective of the correctness of their own versions. They had no considered and definite opinion in the matter.

This false propaganda, however, had just the opposite effect. The name of the Prophet (peace be upon him) became known throughout the country through the nefarious activities of the chiefs of Makkah. A positive kind of approach from the Muslims would not have achieved the same publicity in years as was achieved so rapidly through this negative campaign of the Quraish. It made everybody thinking: After all, who is this man against whom such a campaign of vilification has been started? The serious type among them rather came to the conclusion that they must hear to the Prophet (peace be upon him) himself and said to themselves: After all we are not children who can be easily enticed away.

For instance, Ibn Ishaq has related in detail the story of Tufail-bin-Amr Dausi in his own words: I was a poet of the clan of Daus. Once I went to Makkah and was, on my arrival there, surrounded by some people of the Quraish who told me all sorts of things against the Prophet (peace be upon him). So I grew suspicious and tried to avoid him as much as possible. The very next day, when I went to visit the Sanctuary, I saw him saying his prayer. I heard a few sentences and felt that what he was reciting were excellent words. I said to myself: I am a poet and a sensible young man and no child who cannot discriminate between the right and the wrong. Why should I not therefore meet him and inquire what he is reciting? Accordingly, I followed him to his house and said: The people had so much poisoned me against you that I had actually put cotton into my ears lest I should hear your voice, but what I have heard today from you was so appealing that I feel urged to inquire into your message rather in detail. At this the Prophet (peace be upon him) recited a passage of the Quran. As a result of which I embraced Islam there and then. On my return home I induced my father and wife to become Muslims, which they did, and then invited the people of my clan to embrace Islam with the result that by time of the battle of the Trench, as many as eighty families from my clan had entered the fold of Islam. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. II, pp. 22-24).

According to another tradition cited by Ibn Ishaq, the chiefs of the Quraish confessed in their private meetings that all

their charges against the Prophet (peace be upon him) were false. According to him, addressing a meeting, Nadr bin Harith once said: You cannot overcome Muhammad by the methods you are adopting against him. When he was a young man you regarded him as your bestmannered person and looked upon him as your most truthful and honest man. Now that he has attained advanced age, you say, he is a sorcerer, he is a soothsayer, he is a poet, he is insane. By God, he is not a sorcerer, for we very well know what kind of people the sorcerers are and what kind of tricks they resort to. By God, he is not a soothsayer, for we are fully aware of the guess works of the soothsayers. By God, he is not a poet for we know what poetry is and can judge that his words cannot be classified under poetry in any sense. By God, he is not insane, for we all know what nonsensical things the insane people utter. Therefore, O chiefs of the Quraish, let us think of some other plan to defeat him. After this, he himself proposed that stories from Persia like those of Rustam and Asfandyar should be given publicity to divert the people's attention from the Quran. Accordingly, they put this scheme into practice and Nadr himself began to relate such stories before the people. (Ibn Hisham, Vol. I, pp. 320-321).

مَا اٰمَنَتۡ قَبۡلَهُمۡ مِّنۡ قَرۡيَةٍ اَهۡلَكۡنٰهَا ۚ اَفَهُمۡ يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ۝٦

(21-6) Not one township that We destroyed before them believed. Would they, then, believe? (8)

(8) This contains a concise answer to the demand for a sign in the previous verse.

(1) You ask for signs like the ones which were shown by the former Messengers but you forget that those obdurate people did not believe in spite of the signs shown to them.

(2) While demanding a sign, you fail to realize that the people, who disbelieved even after seeing a sign, were inevitably destroyed.

(3) It is indeed a favor of Allah that He is not showing the sign as demanded by you. Therefore, the best course for you would be to believe without seeing a sign. Otherwise, you will meet the same doom that the former communities met, when they did not believe even after seeing the signs.

وَمَاۤ اَرۡسَلۡنَا قَبۡلَكَ اِلَّا رِجَالًا نُّوۡحِىۡۤ اِلَيۡهِمۡ فَسۡـَٔـلُوۡۤا اَهۡلَ الذِّكۡرِ اِنۡ كُنۡتُمۡ لَا تَعۡلَمُوۡنَ ۝٧

(21-7) (O Muhammad), even before you We never sent any other than human beings as Messengers, and to them We sent revelation. (9) Ask the People of the Book (10) if you do not know.

(9) This is the answer to their objection: This man is no more than a human being like yourselves, and therefore, cannot be a Messenger of God. They have been told that the former Prophets, too, whom you also recognize as Prophets, were human beings and were blessed with revelations from Allah.

(10) That is, you may have it testified by the Jews, who are the enemies of Islam like you, and are teaching you the ways to oppose it, that all the Messengers including Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) were human beings.

وَ مَا جَعَلۡ نٰهُ جَسَدًا لَّا يَاۡ كُلُوۡ نَ الطَّعَامَ وَ مَا كَانُوۡ ا خٰلِدِيۡنَ ۝٨

(21:8) We did not endow the Messengers with bodies that would need no food; nor were they immortals.

ثُمَّ صَدَقۡنٰهُمُ الۡوَعۡدَ فَاَنۡجَيۡنٰهُمۡ وَ مَنۡ نَّشَآءُ وَ اَهۡلَكۡنَا الۡمُسۡرِفِيۡنَ ۝٩

(21-9) Then We fulfilled the promise We had made to them: We rescued them and those whom We wished, and We destroyed those who exceeded all bounds. (11)

(11) History not only tells us that the former Messengers were human beings but it also contains a lesson that they all received Allah’s succor as promised by Him and their enemies were completely destroyed. Therefore you should seriously consider the goal for which you are heading.

لَقَدۡ اَنۡزَلۡنَاۤ اِلَيۡكُمۡ كِتٰبًا فِيۡهِ ذِكۡرُكُمۡ ؕ اَفَلَا تَعۡقِلُوۡنَ ۝١٠

(21-10) We have bestowed upon you a Book that mentions you. Do you not understand? (12)

(12) This is a comprehensive answer to the various objections which were being raised in desperation by the disbelievers of Makkah against the Quran and the Prophet (peace be upon him), as if to say: What is there in this Book that you cannot understand? Why don’t you consider it in the right spirit? There is nothing contradictory in it. It discusses you and your own problems and affairs of life. It describes your own nature, origin and end. It discriminates between good and evil and presents high moral qualities which your own consciences endorse and confirm. Why don’t you, then, use your minds to understand this simple and easy thing?

وَ كَمۡ قَصَمۡنَا مِنۡ قَرۡيَةٍ كَانَتۡ ظَالِمَةً وَّ اَنۡشَاۡنَا بَعۡدَهَا قَوۡمًا اٰخَرِيۡنَ ۝١١

(21-11) How many a wrong-doing town did We shatter and then raise up another people.

فَلَمَّآ اَحَسُّوۡا بَاۡسَنَاۤ اِذَا هُمۡ مِّنۡهَا يَرۡكُضُوۡنَ ؕ﴿۱۲﴾

(21-12) Then, when they perceived Our chastisement[13] they took to their heels and fled.

(13) That is, when they realized that Allah's scourge was actually coming.

لَا تَرۡكُضُوۡا وَارۡجِعُوۡۤا اِلٰى مَاۤ اُتۡرِفۡتُمۡ فِيۡهِ وَمَسٰكِنِكُمۡ لَعَلَّكُمۡ تُسۡـَٔلُوۡنَ ﴿۱۳﴾

(21-13) (They were told): "Flee not, but return to your comforts and to your dwellings. You are likely to be questioned."[14]

(14) This is a very meaningful sentence. It may mean:

(1) Examine this scourge minutely so that if someone asks you about it, you may be able to give an accurate account of it.

(2) Hold your grand meetings as usual. Perhaps your servants may come with folded hands before you to receive orders.

(3) Hold your councils as before, perhaps people may still come to ask for your wise counsels.

قَالُوۡا يٰوَيۡلَنَاۤ اِنَّا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِيۡنَ ﴿۱۴﴾

(21-14) They said: "Woe to us; surely we were wrong-doers."

فَمَا زَالَتۡ تِّلۡكَ دَعۡوٰىهُمۡ حَتّٰى جَعَلۡنٰهُمۡ حَصِيۡدًا خٰمِدِيۡنَ ﴿۱۵﴾

(21-15) They did not cease to cry this until We reduced them to stubble, still and silent.

وَمَا خَلَقۡنَا السَّمَآءَ وَالۡاَرۡضَ وَمَا بَيۡنَهُمَا لٰعِبِيۡنَ ﴿۱۶﴾

(21-16) We did not create in sport the heavens and the earth and all that lies between the two. [15]

(15) This was to refute their entire conception of life which was based on the assumption that man was free to do whatever he liked, and there was none to call him to account or take him to task: that there was no life in the Hereafter where one's good deeds would be rewarded and evil deeds punished. In other words, this meant that the whole universe had been created without any serious purpose and therefore there was no need to pay any heed to the message of the Prophet.

لَوۡ اَرَدۡنَاۤ اَنۡ نَّتَّخِذَ لَهۡوًا لَّاتَّخَذۡنٰهُ مِنۡ لَّدُنَّاۤ ۖ اِنۡ كُنَّا فٰعِلِيۡنَ ﴿۱۷﴾

(21-17) Had it been Our will to find a pastime, We would have found one near at hand; if at all We were inclined to do so. (16)

(16) That is, this world has been created with a definite purpose and not as a plaything. For, if We had wanted to enjoy a sport, We would have done so without creating a sentient, rational and responsible creature like you. Far be it from Us to put man to trial and conflict for the sake of mere fun.

بَلۡ نَقۡذِفُ بِالۡحَقِّ عَلَى الۡبَاطِلِ فَيَدۡمَغُهٗ فَاِذَا هُوَ زَاهِقٌ ؕ وَلَـكُمُ الۡوَيۡلُ مِمَّا تَصِفُوۡنَ ﴿۱۸﴾

(21-18) Nay, We hurl the Truth at falsehood so that the Truth crushes falsehood, and lo! it vanishes. Woe to you for what you utter! (17)

(17) That is, the object for which this world has been created is to stage a conflict between the truth and falsehood. And you yourselves know that in this conflict falsehood has always been defeated and destroyed. You should, therefore, consider this reality seriously. For, if you build the system of your life on the false presumption that it is mere fun, you will meet with the same consequences as the former people did, who presumed that the world was a mere show and pastime. Therefore you should reconsider your whole attitude towards the message which has

come to you. Instead of making fun of it and scoffing at the Messenger, you should take a warning from the fate of the former peoples.

وَ لَ مَ نِ فِی السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الۡاَرۡضِ ؕ وَ مَ نۡ عِنۡدَہٗ لَا یَسۡتَکۡبِرُوۡ نَ عَنۡ عِبَادَتِہٖ وَ لَا یَ سۡتَ سۡحِرُوۡنَ ﴿۱۹﴾

(21-19) To Him [18] belongs whosoever dwells in the heavens and on earth. Those (angels) that are with Him [19] neither disdain to serve Him out of pride, nor do they weary of it. [20]

(18) From here begins the discourse on the confirmation of Tauhid and the refutation of shirk for these were the actual bases of the conflict between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the disbelievers of Makkah. The line of argument is this: The whole system of the universe is a clear proof that there is One Allah Who is its Creator, Sovereign, Ruler, and Lord and it is a falsehood that there are many gods who are partners in His Kingdom and Sovereignty, or that there is a Supreme God Who has under Him some minor gods to conduct the affairs of His Kingdom. This proof is also based on the preceding verses in which it has been stated that the universe has not been created as a pastime or a plaything, but for a serious purpose and that there has always been a conflict between the truth and falsehood, and falsehood has always been defeated and destroyed.

(19) That is, the angels whom the mushriks of Arabia believed to be the children of God and worshiped them as partners in Godhead.

(20) That is, they are engaged in His service day and night without grumbling or ever feeling wearied.

يُسَبِّحُونَ الَّيۡلَ وَ النَّهَارَ لَا يَفۡتُرُونَ ﴿۲۰﴾

(21-20) They glorify Him night and day, without flagging.

اَمِ اتَّخَذُوۡۤا اٰلِهَةً مِّنَ الۡاَرۡضِ هُمۡ يُنۡشِرُوۡنَ ﴿۲۱﴾

(21-21) Have they taken earthly gods who are such that they raise up the dead to life? (21)

(21) This question has been posed to bring home to the disbelievers that when they themselves believed that there is no being other than Allah who can give life to inanimate matter, why do they then acknowledge other deities besides Allah?

لَوۡ كَانَ فِيۡهِمَاۤ اٰلِهَةٌ اِلَّا اللّٰهُ لَفَسَدَتَا ۚ فَسُبۡحٰنَ اللّٰهِ رَبِّ الۡعَرۡشِ عَمَّا يَصِفُوۡنَ ﴿۲۲﴾

(21-22) Had there been any gods in the heavens and the earth apart from Allah, the order of both the heavens and the earth would have gone to ruins. (22) Glory be to Allah, the Lord of the Throne, (23) Who is far above their false descriptions of Him.

(22) This concise sentence contains two arguments:

(1) The obviously simple argument is that no institution, no household, not to speak of the vast universe containing multitudes of countless distant stars, can function smoothly and properly, if it has two masters.

(2) The deeper argument is that the system of the whole universe, including that of the earth, is functioning according to a universal law. It could not work so even for a moment, if there had been no proper proportion, balance, harmony and coordination between the different powers and countless things. This is a clear proof that there is a universal and all powerful law and system which binds and forces these powers and things to cooperate and coordinate between themselves with a perfect proportion and harmony and this could not have happened if there had been different independent rulers. The

existence of such a system is itself a clear proof that there must be One All Powerful Manager and Administrator governing and ruling the entire universe. For further details, please see (E.N. 47 of Surah Bani-Israil).

(23) That is, The Sovereign of the whole universe.

لَا يُسْـَٔلُ عَمَّا يَفْعَلُ وَهُمْ يُسْـَٔلُوْنَ ﴿٢٣﴾

(21-23) None shall question Him about what He does, but they shall be questioned.

اَمِ اتَّخَذُوْا مِنْ دُوْنِهٖٓ اٰلِهَةً ۭ قُلْ هَاتُوْا بُرْهَانَكُمْ ۚ هٰذَا ذِكْرُ مَنْ مَّعِيَ وَذِكْرُ مَنْ قَبْلِيْ ۭ بَلْ اَكْثَرُهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُوْنَ ۙ الْحَقَّ فَهُمْ مُّعْرِضُوْنَ ﴿٢٤﴾

(21-24) Have they taken gods other than Him? Say, (O Muhammad): "Bring forth your proof! Here is the Book with admonition for those of my time and there are also scriptures with admonition for people before me." (24) But most people do not know the Truth, and have, therefore, turned away from it. (25)

(24) The first two were rational arguments and this is a historical one. This means that the study of all the former Scriptures shows that the Creator of the universe is One Allah and He alone is worthy of service and worship, while your religion is neither supported by rational arguments nor by historical evidence.

(25) It is their lack of the knowledge of the reality which has created this indifference towards the message of the Prophet, and the same has made them heedless of the message.

وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنَا مِنْ قَبْلِكَ مِنْ رَّسُوْلٍ اِلَّا نُوْحِيْٓ اِلَيْهِ اَنَّهٗ لَآ اِلٰهَ اِلَّآ اَنَا فَاعْبُدُوْنِ ﴿٢٥﴾

(21-25) Never did We send any Messenger before you to whom We did not reveal: "There is no god but Me. So serve Me alone."

وَ قَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّ حۡمٰنُ وَلَدًا سُبۡحٰنَہٗ ؕ بَلۡ عِبَادٌ مُّکۡرَمُوۡنَ ﴿۲۶﴾

(21-26) They say: "The Most Compassionate Lord has taken to Himself a son." (26) Glory be to Him! Those whom they so designate are only His honoured servants.

(26) Here it refers to the angels as is clear from Ayat

لَا یَسۡبِقُوۡنَہٗ بِالۡقَوۡلِ وَ ہُمۡ بِاَمۡرِہٖ یَعۡمَلُوۡنَ ﴿۲۷﴾

(21-27) They do not outstrip Him in speech and only act as He commands.

یَعۡلَمُ مَا بَیۡنَ اَیۡدِیۡہِمۡ وَ مَا خَلۡفَہُمۡ وَ لَا یَشۡفَعُوۡنَ ۙ اِلَّا لِمَنِ ارۡتَضٰی وَ ہُمۡ مِّنۡ خَشۡیَتِہٖ مُشۡفِقُوۡنَ ﴿۲۸﴾

(21-28) He knows whatever is before them and whatsoever is remote from them and they do not intercede except for him, intercession on whose behalf pleases Him, and they stand constantly in awe of Him. (27)

(27) These two verses refute the two reasons for which the mushriks had made the angels their deities:

(1) They took them for the offspring of Allah.

(2) They thought that if they worshiped the angels, they would be so pleased that they would intercede with Allah on their behalf. See (Surah Younus, Ayat 18); (Surah AzZumur, Ayat 3).

In this connection, it should also be noted that the Quran refutes the doctrine of intercession of the mushriks, saying, that their so called intercessors are not qualified to intercede for anyone. This is so because they have no knowledge of the hidden things, whereas Allah knows all that is hidden from or open to them. Therefore, the angels or Prophets or saints shall be allowed intercession only with the prior permission of Allah. As Allah alone has the power to hear or accept intercession, none else is entitled to divine worship or rights. For further details, please see (Surah TaHa, E. Ns 85-86).

وَمَنۡ يَّقُلۡ مِنۡهُمۡ اِنِّىۡۤ اِلٰهٌ مِّنۡ دُوۡنِهٖ فَذٰلِكَ نَجۡزِيۡهِ جَهَنَّمَ ؕ كَذٰلِكَ نَجۡزِى الظّٰلِمِيۡنَ ﴿۲۹﴾

(21-29) And if anyone of them were to claim: "Indeed I am a god apart from Him," We shall recompense both with Hell. Thus do We recompense the wrong-doers.

اَوَلَمۡ يَرَ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡۤا اَنَّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَالۡاَرۡضَ كَانَتَا رَتۡقًا فَفَتَقۡنٰهُمَا ؕ وَجَعَلۡنَا مِنَ الۡمَآءِ كُلَّ شَىۡءٍ حَىٍّ ؕ اَفَلَا يُؤۡمِنُوۡنَ ۝٣٠

(21-30) Did the unbelievers (who do not accept the teaching of the Prophet) not realize that the heavens and the earth were one solid mass, then We tore them apart, (28) and We made every living being out of water? (29) Will they, then, not believe (that We created all this)?

(28) From the wording of the text, it appears that at first the whole universe was a single mass of matter; then it was split into different parts and the earth and the other heavenly bodies were formed. For more details, please see (Surah HaMim, E.Ns 13-15).

(29) From the wording of the text, it appears that Allah made water the cause and origin of life. See also (Surah An- Nur, Ayat 45).

وَجَعَلۡنَا فِى الۡاَرۡضِ رَوَاسِىَ اَنۡ تَمِيۡدَ بِهِمۡ وَجَعَلۡنَا فِيۡهَا فِجَاجًا سُبُلًا لَّعَلَّهُمۡ يَهۡتَدُوۡنَ ۝٣١

(21-31) And We placed firm mountains on earth lest it should sway with them, (30) and We made wide paths (31) in them that they may find their way; (32)

(30) For explanation, see (E. N. 12 of Surah An-Nahl).

(31) “Broad highways” are the passes between high mountains and the valleys and ravines made by the rivers in the mountainous regions and other natural ways that connect different regions on the earth.

(32) This is a very meaningful sentence. It may mean that the people may find paths for traveling on the earth, and it may also mean that the wisdom that underlies the skill and the system of their creation may guide them to the reality.

وَجَعَلۡنَا السَّمَآءَ سَقۡفًا مَّحۡفُوۡظًا ۚ وَّهُمۡ عَنۡ اٰيٰتِهَا مُعۡرِضُوۡنَ ۝٣٢

(21:32) and We made the sky a secure canopy; [33] and yet they turn away from these Signs. [34]

(33) For explanation, see (Surah Al-Hijr, E. Ns 8 and 10-12).

(34) That is, those signs which are in the sky.

وَهُوَ الَّذِيْ خَلَقَ الَّيْلَ وَالنَّهَارَ وَالشَّمْسَ وَالْقَمَرَ ۭ كُلٌّ فِيْ فَلَكٍ يَّسْبَحُوْنَ ﴿٣٣﴾

(21-33) It is He Who created the night and the day, and the sun and the moon. Each of them is floating in its orbit. (35)

(35) The use of the words kullun (all) and yasbahun (float) in the plural (for more than two) indicates that not only the sun and the moon but all the heavenly bodies are floating in their own separate orbits and none of them is fixed or stationary. These (Verses 30-33) are capable of being interpreted in the modern scientific terms in accordance with the present day conceptions of Physics, Biology and Astronomy.

Here it should also be noted that(Verses 19-23) refute shirk while Verses 30-33 present positive proofs of Tauhid. They imply that the creation and regular functioning of the universe clearly show that it is the work of One All- Powerful Creator, and no sensible person can say that it has been created as a mere pastime for the sake of fun. When the fact is this and you see proofs of the doctrine of Tauhid all around you, in the earth and heavens, why do you reject the message of the Prophet (peace be upon him) and demand other signs from him.

وَمَا جَعَلْنَا لِبَشَرٍ مِّنْ قَبْلِكَ الْخُلْدَ ۭ اَفَاۗىِٕنْ مِّتَّ فَهُمُ الْخٰلِدُوْنَ ﴿٣٤﴾

(21-34) (O Muhammad), [36] We did not grant everlasting life to any human being even before you. If you were to die, will they live for ever?

(36) From here the same theme of the conflict between the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the disbelievers, that was interrupted by (Verses 19-33), has been resumed.

كُلُّ نَفۡسٍ ذَآئِقَةُ الۡمَوۡتِ ؕ وَنَبۡلُوۡكُمۡ بِالشَّرِّ وَالۡخَيۡرِ فِتۡنَةً ؕ وَاِلَيۡنَا تُرۡجَعُوۡنَ ﴿۳۵﴾

(21-35) Every living being shall taste death (37) and We shall subject you to ill and good by way of trial, (38) and to Us shall all of you be eventually sent back.

(37) This is a brief answer to all those warnings and curses with which the Prophet (peace be upon him) was being threatened and the conspiracies which the Quraish were hatching against him day and night. On the one hand, the women of the Quraish cursed him because according to them he had ruined their home life by enticing away their kith and kits. While on the other hand, the chiefs of the Quraish threatened him with horrible consequences for the propagation of Islam. After the emigration to Habash especially, which almost affected every home of Makkah, these curses and threats increased all the more. This verse is meant to comfort and console the Prophet (peace be upon him) as well so that he should continue his mission without any fear of their threats.

(38) That is, Allah is always putting human beings to test and trial both through adversity and affluence. This is to judge whether prosperity makes them proud, cruel and slaves of their lusts or they become grateful to Allah. On the other hand, He inflicts adversity upon them in order to see whether they remain within the prescribed and lawful limits or become low-spirited and down-hearted. A sensible person therefore should not be deluded by prosperity and adversity, but should keep their trial element in view and try to pass through it gracefully.

وَاِذَا رَاٰكَ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡۤا اِنۡ يَّتَّخِذُوۡنَكَ اِلَّا هُزُوًا ؕ اَهٰذَا الَّذِىۡ يَذۡكُرُ اٰلِهَتَكُمۡ وَهُمۡ بِذِكۡرِ الرَّحۡمٰنِ هُمۡ كٰفِرُوۡنَ ﴿۳۶﴾

(21:36) When the unbelievers see you they make you an object of fun, saying: "Is he the one who mentions your gods?" (39) They say so, and yet they reject with disdain the very mention of the Most Compassionate Lord. (40)

(39) It should be noted that this sentence contains only the reason why they scoffed at him, but does not refer to the expression of scoff itself. Obviously, the disbelievers must have been using some other words or expressions of derision to avenge themselves on the Prophet (peace be upon him) for his rejecting their self-made deities.

(40) This is to rebuke the disbelieves as if to say: You cherish so much love of your self-made idols and false gods that you cannot tolerate anything against them. So much so, that you scoff at the Messenger of Allah, and you are not ashamed when you hear the name of the Merciful and discard His mention with disdain.

خُلِقَ الۡاِنۡسَانُ مِنۡ عَجَلٍ ؕ سَاُورِیۡکُمۡ اٰیٰتِیۡ فَلَا تَسۡتَعۡجِلُوۡنِ ﴿۳۷﴾

(21-37) Man is hasty by nature. (41) I shall certainly show you My Signs. (42) Do not ask Me to be hasty.

(41) This is not the literal translation of the text; its purport according to the Arabic usage is: Man is a hasty and impatient creature by his very nature. The same thing has been stated in (Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 11): Man is very hasty and impatient.

(42) From the succeeding sentences it is obvious that signs here stands for the things that have been mentioned therein, the threat of the scourge of Allah, Resurrection and Hell. They made fun of these, as if to say: This man threatens us with the scourge of Allah and the torment of the Day of Resurrection if we deny him and that we shall become fuel of Hell, but nothing of the sort has befallen us. We are as strong as ever and nothing seems to be happening.

وَ یَقُوۡلُوۡنَ مَتٰی ہٰذَا الۡوَعۡدُ اِنۡ کُنۡتُمۡ صٰدِقِیۡنَ ﴿۳۸﴾

(21-38) They say: "(Tell us) when will the threat of punishment come to pass if you are truthful?"

لَوۡ يَعۡلَمُ الَّذِيۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا حِيۡنَ لَا يَكُفُّوۡنَ عَنۡ وُّجُوۡهِهِمُ النَّارَ وَ لَا عَنۡ ظُهُوۡرِهِمۡ وَ لَا هُمۡ يُنۡصَرُوۡنَ ﴿۳۹﴾

(21-39) If only the unbelievers knew of the Hour when they shall not be able to keep off the Fire from their faces, nor from their backs; nor shall they be helped.

بَلۡ تَاۡتِيۡهِمۡ بَغۡتَةً فَتَبۡهَتُهُمۡ فَلَا يَسۡتَطِيۡعُوۡنَ رَدَّهَا وَ لَا هُمۡ يُنۡظَرُوۡنَ ﴿۴۰﴾

(21-40) That will suddenly come upon them and stupefy them. They shall not be able to ward it off, nor shall they be granted any respite.

وَ لَقَدِ اسۡتُهۡزِئَ بِرُسُلٍ مِّنۡ قَبۡلِكَ فَحَاقَ بِالَّذِيۡنَ سَخِرُوۡا مِنۡهُمۡ مَّا كَانُوۡا بِهٖ يَسۡتَهۡزِءُوۡنَ ﴿۴۱﴾

(21-41) Other Messengers before you were also mocked, but those who scoffed at the Messengers were overtaken by the same scourge that they had scoffed at.

قُلۡ مَنۡ يَّكۡلَؤُكُمۡ بِالَّيۡلِ وَ النَّهَارِ مِنَ الرَّحۡمٰنِ ؕ بَلۡ هُمۡ عَنۡ ذِكۡرِ رَبِّهِمۡ مُّعۡرِضُوۡنَ ﴿۴۲﴾

(21-42) Tell them, (O Muhammad): "Who protects you, during the night or the day from the Most Compassionate Lord?" (43) And yet they turn away from the Admonition of their Lord.

(43) That is to say, who is there to protect and save you from the scourge of Allah if you are suddenly visited by it any time during the night or day.

اَمۡ لَهُمۡ اٰلِهَةٌ تَمۡنَعُهُمۡ مِّنۡ دُوۡنِنَا ؕ لَا يَسۡتَطِيۡعُوۡنَ نَصۡرَ اَنۡفُسِهِمۡ وَ لَا هُمۡ مِّنَّا يُصۡحَبُوۡنَ ﴿۴۳﴾

(21-43) Do they have any gods who would protect them against Us? They have no power even to help themselves; nor do they enjoy Our support.

لَهُمۡ مَّنۡعُنَا ؕ وَلَاۤ اَنۡفُسَهُمۡ يَنۡصُرُوۡنَ ۞ بَلۡ مَتَّعۡنَا هٰۤؤُلَاۤءِ وَاٰبَآءَهُمۡ حَتّٰى طَالَ عَلَيۡهِمُ الۡعُمُرُ ؕ اَفَلَا يَرَوۡنَ اَنَّا نَاۡتِى الۡاَرۡضَ نَنۡقُصُهَا مِنۡ اَطۡرَافِهَا ؕ اَفَهُمُ الۡغٰلِبُوۡنَ ۞ ۴۴

(21-44) Nay, We generously provided them and their fathers, and they enjoyed Our provision for long. (44) Do they not see that We are now advancing into their territory, diminishing it from different sides? (45) Is it they, then, who will triumph?" (46)

(44) In other words it means: These people have been deluded by Our favor and Our provisions. They think they are enjoying prosperity and good life as their personal right and there is none to take it away from them. They have forgotten that there is God above them Who is able to make or mar their fortune.

(45) In this connection, see (Surah Ar-Raad, Ayat 41 and E.N. 60) thereof. Here it bears an additional meaning also: Do they not see that an All-Powerful Being is showing His signs every now and then everywhere on the earth in the form of famines, epidemics, floods, earthquakes and other calamities. Millions of people are killed, habitations and harvests are destroyed and other damages are caused, which frustrate all human designs?

(46) It means: When they know that all the resources and provisions of life are in Our hands and that We can increase or decrease them as We will, do they have the power and strength to defend themselves against Our punishment? Can they not see from these signs that their power, prosperity and luxury are not everlasting and that there is an All-Powerful Allah to seize and punish them.

قُلۡ اِنَّمَاۤ اُنۡذِرُكُمۡ بِالۡوَحۡىِ ۚ وَلَا يَسۡمَعُ الصُّمُّ الدُّعَآءَ اِذَا مَا يُنۡذَرُوۡنَ ۞ ۴۵

(21-45) Tell them: "I only warn you by the Revelation." But the deaf do not hear the cry when they are warned.

وَلَئِن مَّسَّتۡهُمۡ نَفۡحَةٌ مِّنۡ عَذَابِ رَبِّكَ لَيَقُولُنَّ يٰوَيۡلَنَآ إِنَّا كُنَّا ظٰلِمِينَ ٤٦

(21-46) Were only the slightest whiff from your Lord's punishment to touch them, (47) they would cry out: "Woe to us; we were indeed wrong-doers."

(47) That is, the same scourge which they are demanding to be hastened and of which they are making fun.

وَنَضَعُ ٱلۡمَوَٰزِينَ ٱلۡقِسۡطَ لِيَوۡمِ ٱلۡقِيٰمَةِ فَلَا تُظۡلَمُ نَفۡسٌ شَيۡـٔٗاۖ وَإِن كَانَ مِثۡقَالَ حَبَّةٖ مِّنۡ خَرۡدَلٍ أَتَيۡنَا بِهَاۗ وَكَفَىٰ بِنَا حَٰسِبِينَ ٤٧

(21-47) We shall set up just scales on the Day of Resurrection so that none will be wronged in the least. (We shall bring forth the acts of everyone), even if it be the weight of a grain of mustard seed. We shall suffice as Reckoners. (48)

(48) See also (Verses 8-9 and E.Ns 8-9 of Surah Al-Araf). It is difficult for us to understand the exact nature of the balance. Anyhow, it is clear that the balance will weigh accurately all the human moral deeds instead of material things, and will help judge whether a man is virtuous or wicked and how much. The Quran has used this word to make mankind understand that every deed, good or bad, will be weighed and judged according to merit.

وَلَقَدۡ ءَاتَيۡنَا مُوسَىٰ وَهَٰرُونَ ٱلۡفُرۡقَانَ وَضِيَآءٗ وَذِكۡرٗا لِّلۡمُتَّقِينَ ٤٨

(21-48) Surely (49) We had granted to Moses and Aaron the Criterion (50) (between right and wrong), and Light and Admonition for the good of the God-fearing, (51)

(49) From here begin the stories of the Prophets. If we consider these stories in the context in which they occur, it becomes clear that these have been related to impress the following themes.

(1) All the former Prophets were human beings. Therefore there is nothing strange or unusual that a human being

like Muhammad (peace be upon him) has been sent as a Messenger.

(2) The mission and teachings of this Prophet are the same as of those who were sent before him.

(3) All the Prophets had been granted a privileged position by Allah, Who blessed them with special favors. For instance, though they were made to suffer from hardships and persecutions for years, ultimately Allah heard their prayers and helped them in miraculous ways against their enemies and persecutors.

(4) In spite of Allah's special favors on them they were no more than His humble servants and human beings and had no share whatever in Godhead. So much so that sometimes they committed errors of judgment, fell ill, were put to trials and even committed faults, for which they were called to account by Allah.

(50) All the three words have been used in praise of the Torah: (1) Alfurqan: A criterion which distinguished the truth from falsehood. (2) Dhiaun: A light which showed the right way of life. (3) Zikrun: An admonition, which reminded the erring descendants of Adam to remember the lesson they had forgotten.

(51) Though it was sent for the good of all human beings, only the pious people, having these characteristics, could benefit from it.

الَّذِيْنَ يَخْشَوْنَ رَبَّهُمْ بِالْغَيْبِ وَهُمْ مِّنَ السَّاعَةِ مُشْفِقُوْنَ ﴿٤٩﴾

(21-49) or those who fear their Lord without seeing Him and dread the Hour (52) (of Reckoning).

(52) The Hour of Resurrection.

وَهٰذَا ذِكْرٌ مُّبٰرَكٌ اَنْزَلْنٰهُ ؕ اَفَاَنْتُمْ لَهٗ مُنْكِرُوْنَ ﴿٥٠﴾

(21:50) This is a Blessed Admonition that We have revealed. Are you, then, going to reject it?

وَلَقَدۡ اٰتَيۡنَاۤ اِبۡرٰهِيۡمَ رُشۡدَهٗ مِنۡ قَبۡلُ وَكُنَّا بِهٖ عٰلِمِيۡنَ ۝
٥١

(21-51) Abraham (peace be upon him) by his people, but We knew his capabilities. Surely We had bestowed wisdom upon Abraham even earlier, and We knew him well. (53)

(53) The Arabic word rushd is very comprehensive and means righteousness as well.

We had blessed Abraham with discretion: The discretion he showed in discriminating between the right and the wrong etc. was not of his own acquirement but had been bestowed on him by Us.

We knew him well: We knew that he was worthy of Prophethood, therefore We appointed him as such. According to (Surah Al-Anaam, Ayat 124): Allah knows best whom to entrust with His Mission. It contains a subtle answer to the objection raised by the chiefs of the Quraish: Why has Allah appointed this man, the Prophet (peace be upon him) to the office of Prophethood, when he is in no way superior to us. This objection has been answered, as if to say: The same objection might even have been raised against Prophet selected him for Prophethood.

In this connection, please also see (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayats 124-141, 258-260): (Surah Al-Anam, Ayats 74-84): (Surah At-Tauba, Ayat 114): (Surah Houd, Ayats 69-76): (Surah Ibrahim, Ayats 35-41): (Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 51-58)and (Surah An-Nahal, Ayats 120-122) and the E.Ns thereof.

اِذۡ قَالَ لِاَبِيۡهِ وَقَوۡمِهٖ مَا هٰذِهِ التَّمَاثِيۡلُ الَّتِىۡۤ اَنۡتُمۡ لَهَا عٰكِفُوۡنَ ۝
٥٢

(21-52) Recall, (54) when he said to his father and his people: "What are these images to which you are devoutly clinging?"

(54) Before proceeding further, it should be kept in mind that the incident from the history of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon

him) has been cited here to refute the erroneous creeds of the Quraish. This was meant to hit them hard for they were the descendants of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) and were proud of their relationship with him. It was he who had built the Kabah which had become the center of the entire Arabia and they, being its keepers, were its most important clan. Therefore, they could not remain indifferent to this answer.

قَالُوْا وَجَدْنَآ اٰبَآءَنَا لَهَا عٰبِدِيْنَ ﴿٥٣﴾

(21-53) They answered: "We found our fathers worshipping them."

قَالَ لَقَدْ كُنْتُمْ اَنْتُمْ وَ اٰبَآؤُكُمْ فِيْ ضَلٰلٍ مُّبِيْنٍ ﴿٥٤﴾

(21-54) He said: "Certainly you and your fathers have all been in manifest error."

قَالُوْٓا اَجِئْتَنَا بِالْحَقِّ اَمْ اَنْتَ مِنَ اللّٰعِبِيْنَ ﴿٥٥﴾

(21-55) They said: "Are you expressing your true ideas before us or are you jesting?" (55)

(55) The literal translation will be: Are you presenting the truth before us, or just playing with us? They were so sure of the truth of their creed that they could never imagine that anyone could be serious in declaring it to be false.

قَالَ بَلْ رَّبُّكُمْ رَبُّ السَّمٰوٰتِ وَ الْاَرْضِ الَّذِيْ فَطَرَهُنَّ وَ اَنَا عَلٰى ذٰلِكُمْ مِّنَ الشّٰهِدِيْنَ ﴿٥٦﴾

(21:56) He said: "Nay, but your Lord is the Lord of the heavens and the earth which He created and to that I bear witness before you.

وَ تَاللّٰهِ لَاَكِيْدَنَّ اَصْنَامَكُمْ بَعْدَ اَنْ تُوَلُّوْا مُدْبِرِيْنَ ﴿٥٧﴾

(21-57) By Allah, I shall certainly carry out my plan against your gods after you are gone." (56)

(56) That is, if you do not understand this by argument, I will present a practical proof that these idols are helpless and have no powers. Therefore, it is wrong to make them your deities.

فَجَعَلَهُم جُذٰذًا اِلَّا كَبِيرًا لَّهُم لَعَلَّهُم اِلَيهِ يَرجِعُونَ ﴿٥٨﴾

(21-58) Then he broke them all into pieces, (57) sparing only the supreme one among them that they may possibly return to him. (58)

(57) This was that practical proof. In the absence of the priests and attendants, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) entered their central Temple and broke all the idols to pieces.

(58) The pronoun in the original text may be translated into it or him. In the former case, it will refer to the chief idol and in the latter to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). In the first case, it will imply a subtle sarcasm in order to make them realize that their creed of idol worship was foolish, for obviously the chief idol could not break the minor idols. In the second case, it will refer to Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), who thought that they might turn to him about the incident and he might get an opportunity to have a frank talk with them about their absurd creed.

قَالُوا مَن فَعَلَ هٰذَا بِاٰلِهَتِنَآ اِنَّهُ لَمِنَ الظّٰلِمِينَ ﴿٥٩﴾

(21-59) (When they saw the idols in this state) they said: "Who has done this to our gods? Surely he is one of the wrong-doers."

قَالُوۡا سَمِعۡنَا فَتًى يَّذۡكُرُهُمۡ يُقَالُ لَهٗۤ اِبۡرٰهِيۡمُ ۚ ﴿۶۰﴾

(21-60) Some of them said: "We heard a youth called Abraham speak (ill) of them."

قَالُوۡا فَاۡتُوۡا بِهٖ عَلٰۤى اَعۡيُنِ النَّاسِ لَعَلَّهُمۡ يَشۡهَدُوۡنَ ﴿۶۱﴾

(21-61) The others said: "Bring him, then, before the eyes of the people that they may see (what will be done to him)." (59)

(59) This was exactly what Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) expected to happen. He wished that the matter should not remain confined to the priests and the attendants but the common people also should be present there to witness that their deities were helpless and their priests were deluding them about their powers. The priests committed the same folly as was later committed by Pharaoh when he arranged an encounter between Prophet Moses (peace be upon him) and the magicians in the open in front of the multitudes of the common people, and the former got an opportunity to show publicly the miracle of the staff which shattered the illusory, magical tricks of the magicians.

قَالُوۡۤا ءَاَنۡتَ فَعَلۡتَ هٰذَا بِاٰلِهَتِنَا يٰۤاِبۡرٰهِيۡمُ ۚ ﴿۶۲﴾

(21-62) (On Abraham's arrival) they said: "Abraham, are you he who has done this to our gods?"

قَالَ بَلۡ فَعَلَهٗۤ ۖ كَبِيۡرُهُمۡ هٰذَا فَسۡـَٔلُوۡهُمۡ اِنۡ كَانُوۡا يَنۡطِقُوۡنَ ﴿۶۳﴾

(21-63) He answered: "Rather it was this supreme one who has done it. So ask them, if they can speak." (60)

(60) The very sentence, “So ask them, if they can speak”, is a clear proof that it was not a lie when Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) said: “But this has done it, biggest of them, this one”. What he intended by this was to make them realize and confess that their idols were helpless because they could do nothing to protect themselves and could not even speak. It is clear that when a person poses an unreal question for the sake of argument in order to bring home the fact that the position taken by the other party is untenable, it cannot be considered as a lie; firstly, because the speaker himself never intended it to be a lie, and secondly, because the addressees also knew that it was not a lie.

The foregoing remarks have been necessitated because of a tradition that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) told three lies in his life, of which one is the above mentioned event. The second lie is contained in SUrah As-Saffaat, Ayat 89: I am indisposed, and the third lie is not contained in the Quran but in the Bible that he declared his wife to be his sister. (Gen. 12:12,13, 18;19). It is a pity that this tradition has given rise to two divergent opinions. The orthodox traditionalists actually believe that Prophet Abraham told these lies just because an authentic tradition says so. They do not consider that it is far better to discard the tradition according to which a Prophet is accused of being a liar. On the other hand, those who are against the traditions, discard all of them just because this solitary tradition, which has been reported as authentic by Bukhari and Muslim, is unreliable on the very face of it. Obviously it needs no elaborate arguments to prove that all the traditions cannot be discarded just because one or a few of them are unreliable. As regards the upholders of the first opinion, they have gone to the other extreme and think that a tradition can be discarded in spite of the authenticity of its reporters for cogent reasons. They do this without reference to the contents of the tradition itself. But if the text of the tradition itself clearly shows that such a thing could

not have been said by the Prophet (peace be upon him), there is no reason to insist that it should be accepted as authentic merely because its reporters are authentic.

This, tradition is unreliable for other reasons also. As has already been shown, the first lie is no lie at all. As regards the second lie, “I am indisposed”; it cannot be considered as a lie unless it is proved beyond doubt that Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was perfectly healthy at that time, and the text does not testify this. As regards the third lie, the event stated in the Bible in chapter 12 of Genesis is absurd on the face of it. When Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) went to Egypt with his wife Sarah, he was, according to the Bible itself, 75 years old and his wife was 65. Therefore the very age of Sarah is a clear proof that she could not be a fair woman to look upon to force Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) to pose that she was his sister in order to save his life. The tradition under discussion, which accuses Prophet Abraham to be guilty of telling a lie, has accordingly no basis at all and cannot be taken as reliable in spite of its authentic reporters.

فَرَجَعُوۡۤا اِلٰۤی اَنۡفُسِہِمۡ فَقَالُوۡۤا اِنَّکُمۡ اَنۡتُمُ الظّٰلِمُوۡنَ ۙ﴿۶۴﴾

(21-64) Thereupon they turned to their (inner) selves and said (to themselves): "Surely it is you who are the wrong-doers."

ثُمَّ نُکِسُوۡا عَلٰی رُءُوۡسِہِمۡ لَقَدۡ عَلِمۡتَ مَا ہٰۤؤُلَآءِ یَنۡطِقُوۡنَ ﴿۶۵﴾

(21-65) Then their minds were turned upside down, [61] and they said: "You know well that they do not speak."

(61) Literally the original text means: They were turned down upon their heads. Some commentators have interpreted it to mean: They hung down their heads with shame. But this does not fit in the context and the wording of the text. The right interpretation would be: When they considered the answer of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him), they realized that they themselves were in the wrong, because they had set up helpless

idols as deities, which could not even speak a word as to who had broken them. But soon after this, they were overpowered by obduracy and ignorance which perverted their minds and they again relapsed into crookedness.

قَالَ اَفَتَعۡبُدُوۡنَ مِنۡ دُوۡنِ اللّٰهِ مَا لَا يَنۡفَعُكُمۡ شَيۡـًٔا وَّ لَا يَضُرُّكُمۡ ۚ ﴿۶۶﴾

(21-66) Abraham said: "Do you, then, worship beside Allah a thing that can neither benefit you nor hurt you?

اُفٍّ لَّكُمۡ وَ لِمَا تَعۡبُدُوۡنَ مِنۡ دُوۡنِ اللّٰهِ ؕ اَفَلَا تَعۡقِلُوۡنَ ﴿۶۷﴾

(21:67) Fie upon you and upon all that you worship beside Allah. Do you have no sense?"

قَالُوۡا حَرِّقُوۡهُ وَ انۡصُرُوۡۤا اٰلِهَتَكُمۡ اِنۡ كُنۡتُمۡ فٰعِلِيۡنَ ﴿۶۸﴾

(21-68) They said: "Burn him, and come to the support of your gods, if you are going to do anything."

قُ نَا يٰنَارُ كُونِ بَ رۡدًا وَّ سَلٰمًا عَلٰٓى اِبۡرٰهِيۡمَ ۙ﴿۶۹﴾

(21-69) We said: "O fire, become coolness and safety for Abraham." (62)

(62) Though this is one of those miracles which have been clearly stated in the Quran, there are people who try to prove that there was no such miracle at all. According to this passage (Ayats 68-70), Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) was actually threatened to be burnt alive and he was accordingly thrown into the burning fire, but Allah ordered the fire to become cool and harmless for him. In the face of the clear words of the Quran, these people deny this miracle because according to them it is impossible even for Allah to go beyond the routine of the physical laws. They say that miracles cannot appeal to the rationalists of the modern age, and therefore these should be interpreted in accordance with physical laws. They forget that according to the Quran, Allah is able to do everything, and He does extraordinary and unusual things which cannot be explained by science. Therefore they should accept the Quran as it is or discard it, but they should not twist it to suit their so called rationalism.

وَ اَرَادُوۡا بِهٖ كَيۡدًا فَجَعَلۡنٰهُمُ الۡاَسۡخَرِيۡنَ ۚ﴿۷۰﴾

(21:70) They had sought to do evil to him, but We caused them to be the worst losers,

وَ نَجَّيۡنٰهُ وَ لُوۡطًا اِلَى الۡاَرۡضِ الَّتِىۡ بٰرَكۡنَا فِيۡهَا لِلۡعٰلَمِيۡنَ ﴿۷۱﴾

(21-71) and We saved him and Lot (63) and brought him to the land upon which We had bestowed Our blessings for all the people of the world. (64)

(63) According to the Bible, Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) had two brothers, Nahor and Haran; Prophet Lot was the son of Haran (Gen. 11:26), and he was the only person to believe in Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). (Surah Al-Ankaboot, Ayat 26).

(64) The blessed land refers to Syria and Palestine, which contains both material and spiritual blessings. It is one of the most fertile regions in the world. Moreover, it was blessed for two thousand years with more Prophets than any other region of the world.

وَ وَهَبۡنَا لَهٗۤ اِسۡحٰقَ ؕ وَ یَعۡقُوۡبَ نَافِلَةً ؕ وَ کُلًّا جَعَلۡنَا صٰلِحِیۡنَ ﴿۷۲﴾

(21-72) And We bestowed upon him Isaac and Jacob as an additional gift, (65) making each of them righteous.

(65) That is, We made his son a Prophet and his grandson too.

وَ جَعَلۡنٰهُمۡ اَئِمَّةً یَّهۡدُوۡنَ بِاَمۡرِنَا وَ اَوۡحَیۡنَاۤ اِلَیۡهِمۡ فِعۡلَ الۡخَیۡرٰتِ وَ اِقَامَ الصَّلٰوةِ وَ اِیۡتَآءَ الزَّکٰوةِ ۚ وَ کَانُوۡا لَنَا عٰبِدِیۡنَ ﴿۷۳﴾

(21-73) And We made them into leaders to guide people in accordance with Our command, and We inspired them to good works, and to establish Prayers and to give Zakah. They worshipped Us alone. (66)

(66) This important event of the life of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) has found no mention whatever in the Bible. In fact nothing about his life in Iraq, his conflict with Nimrod, his father and the community at large, his efforts to eradicate idolatry, the incident of his being cast into the fire, which ultimately led to his forced exile from the country, is mentioned anywhere in the Bible. The Bible merely mentions his migration, and that too, in a manner as if a family was migrating from one country to another in search of livelihood. There is another interesting difference between the Quran and the Bible. According to the Quran, the father of Abraham, who was a mushrik, was foremost in tyrannizing over his son, but the Bible gives a different account, which is as follows.

Now these are the generations of Terah: Terah begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran; and Haran begat Lot. And Haran died before his father Terah in the land of his nativity, in Ur of the

Chaldees. And Abram and Nahor took them wives: the name of Abram's wife was Sarai; and the name of Nahor's wife, Milcah the daughter of Haran, the father of Milcah, and the father of Iscah. But Sarai was barren; she had no child. And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son's son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram's wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan; and they came unto Haran, and settled there. And the days of Terah were two hundred and five years: and Terah died in Haran. (Gen. 11:27-32).

Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee. And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And 1 will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed. (Gen. 12: 1-3).

The Talmud, however, gives quite a few details about the life of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him) about the period of his stay in Iraq, which are generally the same as given in the Quran, but there is a glaring discrepancy in some of the important events. In fact, one can clearly feel that the account given in the Talmud is full of heterogeneous and hypothetical things while the one given in the Quran is most clear and contains nothing unworthy of Prophet Abraham (peace be upon him). We reproduce below the account as given in the Talmud so that the reader may know the difference between the Quranic and Jewish versions. This will also remove the misunderstanding of those who think that the Quran has borrowed stories from the Bible or Jewish literature.

According to the Talmud: The wise men saw a large star in the sky on the night Abram was born and they advised Nimrod to kill the child born in the house of Terah. The King decided to kill the child but Terah hid his child and had a servant's son killed in exchange. Terah thereupon hid his wife and child in a cave where they lived for ten years. In the 11th year Abram was taken by

Terah to Noah, where he lived under the guidance of Noah and his son Shem for 39 years. During the same period Abram married his niece Sarai, who was 42 years his junior. (The Bible does not mention that Sarai was the niece of Abram; moreover, the difference in their ages is mentioned as ten years). (Gen. 11: 29, 17: 17).

The Talmud then says: Abram left Noah at the age of 50 and came back to his father. Here he found that his father was an idolatry and had twelve idols in the house according to the twelve months of the year. He tried to preach to his father against idolatry but when the latter did not listen to him, Abram one day broke all the idols in the house. Seeing this Terah went straight to Nimrod and complained that the son who was born in his house 50 years ago had misbehaved and broken the idols. He wanted the King's verdict on this. Nimrod summoned Abram for interrogation, but the replies given by Abram were straight, terse and clear. Nimrod sent him to jail and then referred the matter to the council for a decision. The council decided that Abram should be burnt to death. A fire was accordingly prepared and Abram was cast into it. His brother and father-in-law Haran was also similarly cast into the fire. Haran was punished because Nimrod enquired of Terah as to why he had another child killed in place of Abram when he wanted to kill Abram on the day of his birth. Terah replied that this was done at the instigation of Haran. Nimrod accordingly let off Terah but threw Haran into the fire along with Abram. Haran was burnt to death instantly but people saw that Abram was walking unhurt through the flames. When Nimrod was informed of it, he witnessed it with his own eyes and cried out: O man of the God of Heaven, come out of the fire and stand before me. Thereupon, Abram came out and Nimrod became one of his believers and gave him many costly presents. After this, according to the Talmud, Abram stayed in Iraq for two more years when Nimrod saw a dreadful dream and the astrologers told him that the destruction of his empire would come through Abram and that he should, therefore, put him to death. Nimrod sent people to kill Abram but Abram came to know of the plot before hand through Eleazar, a slave presented to him by Nimrod himself. Abram accordingly fled and took refuge with

Noah where Terah also met him off and on secretly. The father and the son at last decided to leave the country and Noah and his son Shem also approved of their plan. Accordingly, Terah along with his son Abram and his grandson Lot and his granddaughter and son's wife Sarai, left Ur and went to Haran. (H. Polano: The Talmud Selections, London, pp. 30-42).

Can a reasonable person after reading this account of the Talmud ever imagine that this could be a source book for the story as given in the Quran?

وَ لُ ٖطًا اٰتَیۡنٰ ُحكۡمًا وَّ عِلۡمًا وَّ نَجَّیۡنٰ ُمِنَ ا لۡقَ ۡیَ ۃِ الَّتِ ۡی كَانَتۡ تَّعۡمَلُ الۡخَبٰٓئِثَ ؕ اِنَّ ُهمۡ كَانُ ۡوا قَ ۡوَ مَ سَوۡ ءٍ فٰسِقِیۡنَ ۙ﴿۷۴﴾

(21-74) We bestowed upon Lot sound judgement and knowledge, (67) and We delivered him from the city that was immersed in foul deeds. They were indeed a wicked people, exceedingly disobedient.

(67) The original Arabic word hukm is very comprehensive. It means judgment, wisdom and discretion, and authority from Allah. Ilm stands for the revealed knowledge of the truth. Thus, We bestowed hukm and ilm on Lot. We appointed Lot as a Prophet. (For the story of Lot, see (Surah Al-Araf, Ayats 80-84); (Suran Younus, Ayats 70-83); (Surah Al-Hijr, Ayats 57-74)and the E.Ns there of).

وَ اَ دۡخَلۡ ٰنهُ فِیۡ رَحۡمَتِنَا ؕ اِنَّ ُهمِنَ الصّٰلِحِیۡنَ ۙ﴿۷۵﴾

(21-75) And We admitted him into Our mercy. Verily he was of the righteous.

وَ نُوۡحًا اِذۡ نَادٰی مِنۡ قَ ۡبلُ فَا ۡستَجَبۡنَا لَ ٗهفَنَجَّیۡنٰ ُهوَ اَ ۡهلَ ٗهمِنَ الۡكَ ۡربِ الۡعَظِیۡمِ ۚ﴿۷۶﴾

(21-76) We bestowed the same favour upon Noah. Recall, when he cried to Us before; (68) We accepted his prayer and delivered him and his household from the great distress (69)

(68) This refers to Prophet Noah's (peace be upon him) prayer which he at last made after having tried his utmost to reform his people: Lord, help me for I have been overpowered. (Surah Al-Qamar, Ayat 10), and Lord, do not leave even a single disbeliever on the earth. (Surah Nooh, Ayat 26).

(69) "Great affliction" may either refer to living a miserable life among the wicked people, or to the flood. (For the story of Prophet Noah, see (Surah Al-Araf, Ayats: 59-64); (Surah Younus, Ayats 72-74); (Surah Houd, Ayats 25-48), and(Surah Al-Isra, Ayat 3) and the E.N.s thereof).

وَ نَصَرۡنٰهُ مِنَ الۡقَوۡمِ الَّذِيۡنَ كَذَّبُوۡا بِاٰيٰتِنَا ؕ اِنَّهُمۡ كَانُوۡا قَوۡمَ سَوۡءٍ فَاَغۡرَقۡنٰهُمۡ اَجۡمَعِيۡنَ ﴿۷۷﴾

(21-77) and We helped him against a people who rejected Our signs as false. They were indeed an evil people and so We drowned them all.

وَ دَاوٗدَ وَ سُلَيۡمٰنَ اِذۡ يَحۡكُمٰنِ فِى الۡحَرۡثِ اِذۡ نَفَشَتۡ فِيۡهِ غَنَمُ الۡقَوۡمِ ۚ وَ كُنَّا لِحُكۡمِهِمۡ شٰهِدِيۡنَ ۙ﴿۷۸﴾

(21-78) We bestowed the same favour upon David and Solomon. Recall, when they gave judgement regarding a tillage into which the sheep of some people had strayed at night, and We were witnesses to their judgement.

فَفَهَّمۡنٰهَا سُلَيۡمٰنَ ۚ وَ كُلًّا اٰتَيۡنَا حُكۡمًا وَّ عِلۡمًا ۚ وَّ سَخَّرۡنَا مَعَ دَاوٗدَ الۡجِبَالَ يُسَبِّحۡنَ وَ الطَّيۡرَ ؕ وَ كُنَّا فٰعِلِيۡنَ ﴿۷۹﴾

(21-79) We guided Solomon to the right verdict, and We had granted each of them (70) judgement and knowledge. We made the mountains and the birds celebrate the praise of Allah (71) with David. It was We Who did all this.

(70) There is no mention of this event in the Bible, nor in the Jewish literature. According to the Muslim commentators, it happened like this: The goats of one person entered into the field of another person at night. The latter brought his complaint to

Prophet David who decided that the strayed goats should be given to the owner of the field. Prophet Solomon, however, differed with this and opined that the goats should remain with the owner of the field up to the time that the former tilled and prepared the field as before. In regard to this Allah says: We led Solomon to the right decision. As regards the legal aspect of the matter, we cannot say with certainty what is the Islamic law in such a case nor is there any tradition of the Prophet (peace be upon him) to explain or support it. That is why the jurists have differed about it.

It should, however, be noted that in this context, the incident has been cited to show that the Prophets were after all human beings in spite of their God given powers and abilities. In this case, Prophet David committed an error of judgment because he was not guided by Allah as was Prophet Solomon, though both of them were Prophets. In the succeeding passage the wonderful powers of both have been mentioned to show that they were God given and did not make anyone a god.

Incidentally, we learn from this verse that if two judges give different decisions about one and the same case, both of them will be regarded as righteous, though the decision of only one of them will be correct, provided that both are duly qualified for sitting in judgment on the case. The Prophet (peace be upon him) has stated the same principle more elaborately. In a tradition of Bukhari, he is reported by Amar bin Aas to have said: If a judge does his very best to arrive at the right decision, he will get a double reward in case of a right judgment and a single reward if his judgment is wrong. According to another tradition, cited by Abu Daud and Ibn Majah, on the authority of Buraidah, he is reported to have said: Judges are of three kinds and only one of them will go to Paradise: the one who recognizes the truth and decides according to it. On the other hand, the one who recognizes the truth but gives his decision against it, will go to Hell, and he too, who sits in judgment on a case without the necessary knowledge (and competence).

(71) From the wording of the text, it is clear that the mountains and the birds were subjected to join Prophet David (peace be upon him) with him in glorifying Allah. This is also supported by Surah Sad, Ayat 19: We had subdued the mountains by Our command so that they praised Us with him (David) in the morning and evening, and the birds too, which gathered together and repeated Our praise with him. And, according to Surah Saba, Ayat 10: We commanded the mountains to repeat Our praise with him and also the birds to do the same. We are of the opinion that it means this: When Prophet David (peace be upon him) sang hymns of Allah's praise and glory, in his rich and sweet voice, the mountains echoed back his melodies and the birds gathered round him and the whole scene became charming. Our interpretation is supported by this tradition.

Once when Abu Musa Ashari, who had an extremely sweet voice, was reciting the Quran, the Prophet (peace be upon him) who was passing by, stood and listened to him for a long time. When he finished the recital, the Prophet (peace be upon him) remarked: This man has been granted a portion of the melody of David.

وَعَلَّمۡنٰهُ صَنۡعَةَ لَبُوۡسٍ لَّكُمۡ لِتُحۡصِنَكُمۡ مِّنۡۢ بَاۡسِكُمۡ ۚ فَهَلۡ اَنۡتُمۡ شٰكِرُوۡنَ ﴿۸۰﴾

(21-80) It was We Who taught him the art of making coats of mail for your benefit so that it may protect you from each other's violence. (72) Do you, then, give thanks? (73)

(72) According to (Surah Saba, Ayats 10-11), it was like this: And We made the iron soft for him (and commanded him): Make coats of mail complete in every way, and arrange the plates properly. This shows that Allah had made Prophet David an expert in the use of iron, and had especially taught him the art of an armorer for defense purposes. This fact is confirmed by archaeological and historical researches, for according to these the iron age in the world started between 1200 and 1000 BC and this was precisely the period of Prophet David. At first the Hittites in Syria and Asia Minor, who flourished between 2000 and 1200 BC, discovered a

method of melting and molding iron, but they guarded it as a close secret from the world, and it could not be put to common use. Later on, the Philistines came to know of it, but they too guarded it as a secret. The incessant defeats suffered by the Israelites at the hands of the Hittites and the Philistines before King Saul, were due mainly to the use of chariots of iron in their wars by the latter. (Joshua, 17:16; Judges, 1: 19, 4: 2-3). In 1020 BC when Saul became ruler over the Israelites by Allah's command, he subdued the Canaanites and recaptured most of Palestine. After him Prophet David (1004-965 BC) not only annexed the whole of Palestine and Jordan to the Israeli kingdom but a major portion of Syria as well. This was the time when the secret of armor making closely guarded by the Hittites and the Philistines, became well known and cheaper articles of daily use began to be made. The recent archaeological excavations conducted in Edom, to the south of Palestine, which is rich in iron ore, have brought to light furnaces for melting and molding iron. The furnace excavated near Ezion-geber, a port on the Gulf of Aqabah, in the time of Prophet Solomon, seems to have been built on the principles which are used in the modern blast furnaces. It is therefore natural that Prophet David must have first of all utilized this discovery for war purposes, because a little earlier the hostile Canaanites around his kingdom had made life really difficult for his people. The Bible also says that Prophet David was an expert in the art of melting and using iron for war purposes. (See Joshua, 17: 16; Judges, 1:19 and 4: 2-3).

(73) For further details about Prophet David, please see (Surah Al-Baqarah, Ayat 251) and (Sura Al-Isra, Ayat 55)and the E.Ns thereof.

وَ لِسُلَ يۡمٰنَ الرِّيۡحَ عَاصِفَ ةً تَجۡ رِيۡ بِاَمۡ رِهٖۤ اِلَى الۡاَ رۡضِ الَّتِىۡ بٰرَكۡنَا فِيۡهَا ؕ وَ كُنَّا بِكُلِّ شَىۡءٍ عٰلِمِيۡنَ ۙ﴿۸۱﴾

(21-81) And We subdued the strongly raging wind to Solomon which blew at his bidding towards the land We blessed. (74) We know everything.

(74) This is also explained in (Surah Saba, Ayat 12): And for Solomon We had subjected the wind which covered a month's

journey in the morning and a month's journey in the evening, and in (Surah Sad, Ayat 36): So We subjected the wind to him. It blew softly at his bidding wherever he wanted it to blow. Thus it is clear that the wind was so subjected to Prophet Solomon that the voyages to places at one month's sea journey could be performed conveniently, because a favorable wind was always blowing for his ships to and from those places.

It is confirmed by the Bible that Prophet Solomon had developed sea trade on a large scale. (I Kings, 10: 22). On the one side, his trade ships sailed from Ezion-geber, through the Red Sea, towards Yaman and other southern and eastern lands, and on the other, his naval fleet called Thar-shish, sailed on the Mediterranean to the western countries. The great furnace which he had built at Eziongeber for melting and molding ores extracted from the copper and iron mines in the Arabah in Edom, has been confirmed by modem archaeological researches as well. This molten iron and copper was used in building ships besides being put to other uses. The Quran refers to this when it says: And We made a fountain of molten copper to flow for him (Solomon). (Surah Saba, Ayat 12).

As regards to the subjection of the wind, it may mean that Allah, by His special favor, had so arranged that the wind, and sea voyages in those days depended entirely on wind, was always favorable for Prophet Solomon's fleet. But if we take the literal meaning of Verse 81: It blew at his command, there will be no harm, for Allah is able to give such powers to any of His servants He pleases.

وَ مِنَ الشَّيٰطِ نِ مَنۡ يَّغُوۡ صُوۡنَ لَ ۥ وَ يَعۡ مَلُ وۡ نَ عَمَلًا دُ وۡ نَ ذٰلِكَ وَ كُنَّا لَهُم حٰفِظِيۡنَ ۙ﴿۸۲﴾

(21-82) And We subdued many devils who dived (into the sea) for him and carried out other jobs besides that. We kept watch over all of them. (75)

(75) The subjection of satans has been explained in (Surah Saba, Ayats 12-13). Incidentally, these verses of the Quran clearly show

that the satans and jinns who worked for Prophet Solomon belonged to quite a different genus from human beings. Therefore, it is wrong to pervert the Quran to prove that they were human beings as some modernist commentators have tried to do. It is obvious from the wording of the Quran and the context in which the story of the jinns has been related, that they were not human beings. Had they been so this would have been no special favor to Solomon, because human beings had already built the gigantic monuments like the pyramids of Egypt.

وَ اَيُّ وۡبَ ۚ اِ نَادٰی رَبَّ ٗ اَنِّ ۡ مَسَّنِیَ الضُّرُّ وَاَ ۡ تَ اَ حَمُ الرّٰحِمِیۡنَ ۚ ۸۳

(21-83) We bestowed (the same wisdom, judgement and knowledge) upon Job. (76) Recall, when he cried to his Lord: "Behold, disease has struck me and You are the Most Merciful of those that are merciful." (77)

(76) There is a wide divergence of opinion concerning the personality, period and nationality of Prophet Job. Some commentators opine that he was an Israelite, while others think that he was an Egyptian or an Arab who lived before Prophet Moses, or during the time of Prophets David and Solomon (peace be upon them all). As all these conjectures are based on the Book of Job, which is self-contradictory and against the Quran. Nothing can be said about him with certainty, but in the light of the Book of Isaiah (8th century BC) and the Book of Ezekiel (6th century BC), which are more trustworthy works, he lived in the 9th century BC or even earlier. As regards to his nationality, the context in which his name occurs in (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat 163) and (Surah Al-Anam, Ayat 84), it may be assumed that he was an Israelite. According to a saying of Wahb bin Munabbih, he might have been from the offspring of Esau, a son of Prophet Isaac.

(77) The words of the prayer are note-worthy. Prophet Job mentions his distress but does not say anything more to his Lord except: You are the most Merciful. This is a great proof of his fortitude, noble and contented nature.

فَاسۡتَجَبۡنَا لَهٗ فَكَشَفۡنَا مَا بِهٖ مِنۡ ضُرٍّ ؕ وَ اٰتَيۡنٰهُ اَهۡلَهٗ وَ مِثۡلَهُمۡ مَّعَهُمۡ رَحۡمَةً مِّنۡ عِنۡدِنَا وَ ذِكۡرٰى لِلۡعٰبِدِيۡنَ ﴿۸۴﴾

(21-84) We accepted his prayer and removed the affliction (78) from him, and We not only restored to him his family but as many more with them as a mercy from Us and as a lesson to the worshippers. (79)

(78) How his disease was cured has been explained in (Surah Suad, Ayat 42): Stamp the ground with your foot: here is cool water for you to wash with and to drink. From this it appears that no sooner did he stamp the ground than a spring gushed forth. He took bath and drank the water and was cured of his disease. The nature of the treatment hints that he was suffering from a skin disease. This is confirmed by the Bible as well. Satan smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot unto his crown. (Job, 2:7).

(79) It will be worthwhile to compare the high character of Prophet Job as given in the Quran with that in the Book of Job in the Bible. The Quran presents him as a veritable picture of patience and fortitude and an excellent model for the worshippers of Allah, but his general picture presented in the Book of Job is that of a man who is full of grievance against God: Let the day perish wherein I was born, and the night in which it was said, There is a man child conceived. Let them curse (the night) that curse the day. Because it shut not the doors of my mother's womb, nor did sorrow from mine eyes. Why died I not from the womb? (Chapter 3). Oh that my grief were thoroughly weighed, and my calamity laid in the balance together, the arrows of the Almighty are within me, the poison whereof drinketh up my spirit: the terrors of God do set themselves in array against me. (Chapter 6) I have sinned; what shall I do unto thee, O thou preserver of men? Why hast thou set me as a mark against thee, so that I am a burden to myself? And why dost thou not pardon my transgressions, and take away my iniquity? (Chapter 7: 20-21).

His three friends try to console him and counsel patience, but in vain. He says: My soul is weary of my life. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul (10:1). I have heard many such

things: miserable comforters are ye all. (16:2). So these three men ceased to answer Job. Then was kindled the wrath of Elihu against Job, because he justified himself rather than God." (32:1-3), but he also failed to console him. Then the Lord himself came down and condemned the three friends and Elihu and rebuked Job and then forgave him, accepted him and blessed him. (Chapters 41, 42). It should be noted that in the first two chapters of this Book, Prophet Job is presented as a perfect and upright man who feared God, but in the following chapters he becomes an embodiment of grievance against God, as though the estimate of Satan about him was correct and that of God incorrect. Thus this Book itself is a clear evidence that it is neither the word of God nor of Prophet Job but had been written afterwards by some literary man and incorporated in the Bible as a scripture.

وَ اِ سۡمٰعِيۡلَ وَ اِدۡرِيۡسَ وَ ذَا الۡكِفۡلِ ؕ كُلٌّ مِّنَ الصّٰبِرِيۡنَ ۖ ﴿۸۵﴾

(21-85) And (We bestowed the same favour) upon Ishmael, Idris (80) and Dhu al-Kifl, (81) for they were all steadfast.

(80) For explanation, see(Surah Maryam E. N. 33).

(81) Zul-Kifl is not the name but the title of a righteous man, which literally means a man of luck. Here it does not refer to worldly prosperity but to his high character and ranks in the Hereafter. He has also been mentioned by this title in(Surah Sad, Ayat 48). There are different opinions about his identity and nationality. Some have regarded him as Zacharias (but this is not correct because Zacharias has been mentioned separately in(Verse 89). Others say that he was Elias, or Joshua, son of Nun, or Elisha, but this again is incorrect, because in (Surah Sad, Ayat 49) Elisha and Zul-Kifl have been mentioned as separate personalities. Some others say that he was Prophet Job's son, named Bishr, who succeeded him as Prophet.

Allamah Alusi says: The Jews claim that he was Ezekiel who was appointed to Prophethood during the captivity (597 BC) of the Israelites and he performed his mission in a habitation by the side of the Chebar canal.

These conflicting opinions indeed confirm nothing. The modern commentators, however, are inclined to believe that he was Ezekiel, though there is no convincing argument about it. This opinion is sound because his description in this verse that he was a patient and righteous man and was blessed by God is fully confirmed by the Book of Ezekiel. He was one of those people who had been taken prisoner by Nebuchadnezzar at the downfall of Jerusalem, who settled the Israeli exiles at Tel-abib by the river Chebar in Iraq. Here, in 594 BC, Ezekiel was raised to Prophethood when he was hardly 30, and he continued preaching the message of God to the exiled Israelites as well as to the iniquitous people and rulers of Jerusalem for full 22 years. In the 9th year of his mission, his wife whom he called the desire of his eyes died, but when the people came to mourn her death, he warned them of the wrath of God and the impending disaster. (Chapter 24: 15-21). The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel in the Bible is one of those scriptures which appear to be genuine and divinely inspired.

وَ اَ لۡنٰهُم ۡ فِ ۡ رَ حۡمَتِنَا ؕ اِنَّ ۡ مِّنَ الصّٰلِحِيۡنَ ۸۶

(21-86) And We admitted them into Our mercy, for they were of the righteous.

وَ ذَاالنُّوۡنِ اِذۡ ذَّهَبَ مُغَاضِبًا فَظَنَّ اَنۡ لَّنۡ نَّقۡدِرَ عَلَيۡهِ فَنَادٰى فِى الظُّلُمٰتِ اَنۡ لَّاۤ اِلٰهَ اِلَّاۤ اَنۡتَ سُبۡحٰنَكَ اِنِّىۡ كُنۡتُ مِنَ الظّٰلِمِيۡنَ ۚ﴿۸۷﴾

(21-87) And We bestowed Our favour upon Dhu al-Nun. (82) Recall, when he went forth enraged, (83) thinking We have no power to take him to task. (84) Eventually he cried out in the darkness:" (85) There is no god but You. Glory be to You! I have done wrong."

(82) That is, Jonah, literally Dhun-Nun means the man of the fish. He was called so because he was devoured by a fish by the command of Allah. (Also See (Surah As-Safat, Ayat 142) and (Surah Younus, Ayat 98 and its E.Ns 98-100).

(83) Prophet Jonah left his people before he received Allah's command for migration.

(84) He presumed that he should leave, the place which was going to be visited by the scourge of Allah. This was not by itself an offence but it was an offence for a Prophet to leave the place of his mission without the permission of Allah.

(85) "Darkness": the darkness in the belly of the fish and the darkness of the sea over and above it.

فَاسۡتَجَبۡنَا لَهٗ ۙ وَ نَجَّيۡنٰهُ مِنَ الۡغَمِّ ؕ وَ كَذٰلِكَ نُـۡجِى الۡمُؤۡمِنِيۡنَ ۚ﴿۸۸﴾

(21-88) Thereupon We accepted his prayer, and rescued him from grief. Thus do We rescue the believers.

وَ زَكَرِيَّاۤ ۘ اِذۡ نَادٰى رَبَّهٗ رَبِّ لَا تَذَرۡنِىۡ فَرۡدًا وَّ اَنۡتَ خَيۡرُ الۡوٰرِثِيۡنَ ۚ﴿۸۹﴾

(21-89) And We bestowed favour upon Zechariah, when he cried to his Lord: "Lord! Leave me not solitary (without any issue). You are the Best Inheritor."

فَاسۡتَجَبۡنَا لَهٗ ۙ وَ وَهَبۡنَا لَهٗ يَحۡيٰى وَ اَصۡلَحۡنَا لَهٗ ؕ زَوۡجَهٗ ؕ اِنَّهُمۡ كَانُوۡا يُسٰرِعُوۡنَ فِى الۡخَيۡرٰتِ وَ يَدۡعُوۡنَنَا رَغَبًا وَّ رَهَبًا ؕ وَ كَانُوۡا لَنَا خٰشِعِيۡنَ ۚ﴿۹۰﴾

(21-90) So We accepted his prayer and bestowed upon him John, and We made his wife fit [86]) (to bear a child). Verily they hastened in doing good works and called upon Us with longing and fear, and humbled themselves to Us. [87]

(86) "Cured his wife": We cured his wife of sterility. As "You are the best of the Inheritors", I shall have no grief even if You do not give me any child. (For further details, please see (Surah Ale-Imran, Ayats 37-41) and (Surah Maryam, Ayats 2-14) and the E.Ns thereof).

(87) It will be worthwhile to reiterate the reasons why the stories of the Prophets have been cited in this Surah.

(1) The story of Prophet Zacharias has been cited to impress on the minds that all the Prophets were human beings and servants of Allah and had no tinge of Godhead in them. They had no power to bestow children upon others because they themselves had to pray to Allah for children for themselves.

(2) The story of Prophet Jonah has been cited to show that even a great Prophet like him did not go unnoticed when he committed an error in regard to Allah's message. But when he repented, Allah, by His grace, delivered him alive from the belly of the fish.

(3) The mention of Prophet Job has been made to show that even Prophets were put to hard trials and afflictions and even they had to beg Allah to restore them to health, not to speak of curing others of diseases.

Along with these, the other important thing which is meant to be impressed is that all the Prophets believed in the doctrine of Tauhid. That is why they begged and prayed to One Allah alone to fulfill their needs and requirements. Though they met with trials, Allah helped them and granted their prayers in supernatural and miraculous ways.

وَالَّتِيْٓ اَحْصَنَتْ فَرْجَهَا فَنَفَخْنَا فِيْهَا مِنْ رُّوْحِنَا وَجَعَلْنٰهَا وَابْنَهَآ اٰيَةً لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ﴿٩١﴾

(21-91) And also recall the woman who guarded her chastity: [88] We breathed into her of Our spirit, [89] and made her and her son a Sign to the whole world. [90]

(88) That is, Mary (peace be upon her).

(89) It should be noted that the incident of the birth of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was not different from that of Prophet Adam, because the wording of the Arabic text in the two cases is almost identical: See (Surah Sad, Ayats 71-72). Besides this in (Verse 91), almost similar words have beets used in regard to the birth of Jesus (peace be upon him). See also (Surah An-Nisa, Ayat l71) and(Surah At-Tahrim, Ayat 12). Allah Himself has stated that the birth of Prophet Jesus (peace be upon him) was just like the birth of Prophet Adam: In the sight of Allah, the case of the birth of Jesus is like that of Adam, whom He created out of dust and said, Be, and he was. (Surah Ale-Imran, Ayat 59). In the light of these verses, we may conclude that Allah uses words like: We breathed into him or her of Our spirit for miraculous births. (For details please see (Surah An-Nisa E.Ns 212-213).

(90) That is, The mother and the son were not partners of God nor had any share whatsoever in Godhead, but were a sign from among the signs of God. (See Surah Maryam, E.N. 21).

اِنَّ هٰذِهٖۤ اُمَّتُكُمۡ اُمَّةً وَّاحِدَةً وَّ اَنَا رَبُّكُمۡ فَاعۡبُدُوۡنِ﴿۹۲﴾

(21-92) Verily this community of yours is a single community, and I am your Lord; so worship Me.

وَ تَقَطَّعُوۡۤا اَمۡرَهُمۡ بَيۡنَهُمۡ ؕ كُلٌّ اِلَيۡنَا رٰجِعُوۡنَ﴿۹۳﴾

(21-93) But they tore asunder their faith into many parts. [91] But to Us they are bound to return.

(91) In this verse, the addressees are the entire mankind. It means: O mankind, in reality all of you belonged to one community and had one and the same religion and all the Prophets brought one and the same creed which was this: Allah

alone is the Lord of all mankind, therefore they should worship Him alone. But afterwards the people corrupted this creed and invented and adopted the things they liked and mixed their own theories, whims and practices in it. This brought into being countless communities and religions. Thus it is absolutely wrong to say that a particular Prophet was the founder of a particular religion and another of another, and so on. The very fact that different religions came into being at different periods of time, does not prove that the Prophets created these differences. It is obvious that the Prophets of God could not found different religions nor could they teach their followers to worship any beings other than Allah.

فَمَنۡ يَّعۡمَلۡ مِنَ الصّٰلِحٰتِ وَهُوَ مُؤۡمِنٌ فَلَا كُفۡرَانَ لِسَعۡيِهٖ وَاِنَّا لَهٗ كٰتِبُوۡنَ ﴿۹۴﴾

(21-94) Then whosoever does righteous works, while believing, his striving will not go unappreciated. We record them all for him.

وَحَرٰمٌ عَلٰى قَرۡيَةٍ اَهۡلَكۡنٰهَاۤ اَنَّهُمۡ لَا يَرۡجِعُوۡنَ ﴿۹۵﴾

(21-95) It has been ordained against every town that We ever destroyed that they shall not return [92] (to enjoy a new lease of life)

(92) The Arabic text of (Verse 95) may be interpreted in three ways.

(1) The community which is once destroyed by the scourge of Allah can never have a second or new life.

(2) After its destruction, its people are not given a second chance for their test, then they shall be presented in the court of Allah for final judgment.

(3) When a community transgresses the last limits in its wickedness, injustices and disobedience, and Allah ordains to destroy it, no other chance of repentance is given to it because it becomes incapable of turning back to right guidance.

حَتّٰۤى اِذَا فُتِحَتۡ يَاۡجُوۡجُ وَمَاۡجُوۡجُ وَهُمۡ مِّنۡ كُلِّ حَدَبٍ يَّنۡسِلُوۡنَ ﴿۹۶﴾

(21-96) until Gog and Magog are let loose, and begin swooping from every mound,

وَاقۡتَرَبَ الۡوَعۡدُ الۡحَقُّ فَاِذَا هِیَ شَاخِصَةٌ اَبۡصَارُ الَّذِیۡنَ كَفَرُوۡا یٰوَیۡلَنَا قَدۡ كُنَّا
فِیۡ غَفۡلَةٍ مِّنۡ هٰذَا بَلۡ كُنَّا ظٰلِمِیۡنَ ﴿۹۷﴾

(21-97) and the time for the fulfilment of the true promise of Allah draws near, (93) whereupon the eyes of those who disbelieved will stare in fear, and they will say: "Woe to us, we were indeed heedless of this; nay, we were wrongdoers." (94)

(93) For the details about Gog and Magog, see (E.Ns 62 and 69 of Surah Al-Kahf). They will be let loose in the sense that they will swoop down on the regions of the earth like a beast of prey which is set free from its cage suddenly. The time of the fulfillment of the true promise will come on the eve of Resurrection and the appearance of Gog and Magog will be a sign of it. In a tradition related in Muslim, by Huzaifah bin Asid Ghifari, the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Resurrection will not take place until ten signs appear:

(1) The smoke. (2) Dajjal. (3) Daabat-ul-Ard. (4) Rising of the sun from the west. (5) Coming down of Jesus, son of Mary. (6) Sudden attack of Gog and Magog. (7-9) Three land slides, one in the east, the second in the west and the third in Arabia. (10) The flare up of a great fire from Yaman which will drive the people to the Plain of Resurrection. In another tradition the Prophet (peace be upon him) stated that after the swoop of Gog and Magog, Resurrection will be so near that it may take place at any moment just as a pregnant woman might deliver the child at any moment, in the day or night, after her term has expired. But the reference to the appearance of Gog and Magog in the Quran and Hadith does not indicate that they will swoop on mankind jointly. It may be that they will clash against each other near the time of Resurrection and their mutual conflict might result in a universal catastrophe and destruction.

(94) “We were in heedlessness” contains a kind of excuse in it, as if to say: The Prophets warned us of the Day of Resurrection but we were wrongdoers and paid no heed to their warning.

اِنَّكُمۡ وَمَا تَعۡبُدُوۡنَ مِنۡ دُوۡنِ اللّٰهِ حَصَبُ جَهَنَّمَ ؕ اَنۡتُمۡ لَهَا وٰرِدُوۡنَ ﴿۹۸﴾

(21-98) (They will be told): "Verily you and the gods you worshipped beside Allah are the fuel of Hell. All of you are bound to arrive there. (95)

(95) We learn from traditions that Abdullah bin Azzaara raised an objection in this connection, saying: According to this not only our deities but Prophets Jesus and Uzair (peace be upon them) and the Angels also will become fuel for Hell because they are also worshiped. The Prophet (peace be upon him) replied: Yes, everyone who would approve of his own worship instead of Allah's will go to Hell along with those who worshiped him. He meant to say: There is no reason why Prophets Jesus and Uzair (peace be upon them) and the Angels should go to Hell because they never approved that they should be worshiped instead of Allah, and were not responsible for this. On the other hand, they taught people to worship Allah alone. Of course, those who tried to become deities and became partners in the shirk of others will certainly go to Hell along with their worshipers. Likewise those, who induced others to take deities other than Allah, will go to Hell. Satan comes under this category for he induces others to make deities. Thus it is Satan who is made the real deity whom they obey and commit shirk. Besides this, idols of stone and wood and other accessories of shirk will also be thrown into Hell along with the mushriks so that the latter should see that their deities were becoming a cause of the intensity of their torture of fire instead of becoming their intercessors.

لَوۡ كَانَ هٰٓؤُلَآءِ اٰلِهَةً مَّا وَرَدُوۡهَا ؕ وَ كُلٌّ فِيۡهَا خٰلِدُوۡنَ ۹۹

(21-99) Had these indeed been gods they would not have gone there. But (as it is), all of you shall ever abide in it."

لَهُمۡ فِيۡهَا زَفِيۡرٌ وَّهُمۡ فِيۡهَا لَا يَسۡمَعُوۡنَ ۱۰۰

(21-100) There they shall groan (96) with anguish and the din and noise in Hell will not let them hear anything.

(96) The Arabic word zafeer means hard breathing because of excessive heat, hard work and weariness.

اِنَّ الَّذِيۡنَ سَبَقَتۡ لَهُمۡ مِّنَّا الۡحُسۡنٰٓى ۙ اُولٰٓئِكَ عَنۡهَا مُبۡعَدُوۡنَ ۱۰۱

(21-101) But for those whom We had decided to favour with good reward, they shall be kept far removed from Hell. (97)

(97) These will be the people who practiced virtue and righteousness in this world. Allah has already promised that they will be kept safe from the torture and will be granted salvation.

لَا يَسۡمَعُوۡنَ حَسِيۡسَهَا ۚ وَهُمۡ فِىۡ مَا اشۡتَهَتۡ اَنۡفُسُهُمۡ خٰلِدُوۡنَ ۱۰۲

(21-102) They shall not hear even a whisper of it, and they shall live for ever in the delights which they had desired.

لَا يَحۡزُنُهُمُ الۡفَزَعُ الۡاَكۡبَرُ وَتَتَلَقّٰىهُمُ الۡمَلٰٓئِكَةُ ؕ هٰذَا يَوۡمُكُمُ الَّذِىۡ كُنۡتُمۡ تُوۡعَدُوۡنَ ۱۰۳

(21-103) The Hour of the Great Terror shall not grieve them, (98) and the angels shall receive them saying: "This is your Day which you had been promised."

(98) That is, the time of mustering and going before Allah will be very dreadful for the common people but the righteous people will have full peace of mind because everything will be happening

according to their expectations. Their faith and the righteous deeds they did in the world, will help console them by the grace of Allah and, instead of grief and sorrow, they will be filled with the hope that they are going to get their promised rewards.

يَوْمَ نَطْوِى السَّمَآءَ كَطَىِّ السِّجِلِّ لِلْكُتُبِ ؕ كَمَا بَدَاۡنَاۤ اَوَّلَ خَلْقٍ نُّعِيۡدُهٗ ؕ وَعْدًا عَلَيۡنَا ؕ اِنَّا كُنَّا فٰعِلِيۡنَ ١٠٤

(21-104) On that Day We shall roll up the heavens like a scroll for writing. Even as We originated the creation first so We shall repeat it. This is a promise binding on Us; and so We shall do.

وَ لَقَدْ كَتَبْنَا فِى الزَّبُوۡرِ مِنۡۢ بَعْدِ الذِّكْرِ اَنَّ الْاَرْضَ يَرِثُهَا عِبَادِىَ الصّٰلِحُوۡنَ ١٠٥

(21-105) Surely We wrote in the Psalms, after the exhortation, that the earth shall be inherited by My righteous servants.

اِنَّ فِیۡ هٰذَا لَبَلٰغًا لِّقَوۡمٍ عٰبِدِیۡنَ ﴿۱۰۶﴾

(21-106) Herein, surely, is a message for those devoted to worship. (99)

(99) The interpretation of this verse has given rise to a great misunderstanding. Some people have tried to interpret it in a way, which is entirely opposed to the ideology of the Quran. They interpret it to mean: The inheritance of the kingdom and the resources of the earth are given to the righteous people alone in this worldly life, and upon them alone Allah showers His favors and blessings. Then they apply this formula conversely and conclude that the gift of this inheritance of the earth is the sole criterion between the righteous and the unrighteous men. The righteous is the one who inherits the sovereignty of the earth and the unrighteous the one who is deprived of this inheritance. But when they apply their formula in the historical perspective, they find that most of those nations which have inherited the earth in the past and are inheriting it today, have been and are mostly disbelieving, mushriks, atheists and immoral, and that these are not the characteristics of the righteous people when judged by the criterion put forward by the Quran. From Nimrod and Pharaoh to the present day communist despots, who have been inheriting the earth, were and are unbelievers and the enemies of God and therefore could not be considered righteous, according to the Quranic formula. Faced with this situation, they start arguing that there must be some error in the conception of the righteous which should be such as would fit all the inheritors of the earth whether they were Caliphs like Abu Bakr Siddiq and Umar Farooq or Chingez and Halaku. This research leads them to the Darwinian theory of the survival of the fittest and they assume fitness to be a synonym of righteousness.

According to this new conception or definition of righteousness, the proposition would plainly mean: Any person, or a group of persons, who is capable of conquering and subduing countries by military force and has the ability to exploit the resources of the earth successfully is a righteous servant of Allah and his achievement is a criterion and message of righteousness

and worship for other human beings to follow. Consequently, if they fail to achieve the inheritance of the earth, they will neither be regarded among the righteous nor among the servants of Allah. As a result of this interpretation of the verse, and this conception of righteousness and service, they were confronted with the interpretation of some basic and fundamental articles of the Islamic faith. For instance, according to the Quran, no deed, howsoever good, could be regarded as righteous without belief in Allah, the Hereafter, the Prophets and the Books. Moreover, the invitation of the Prophet to accept the moral and legal systems of Islam would become meaningless. Then these people could not reconcile their interpretation with the teachings of the Quran that obedience to the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the commandments of Allah was absolutely essential for a righteous man and that the lack of this would make a person a disbeliever and a transgressor who deserved the wrath of Allah. If they had faced this problem boldly and honestly, they would have realized that their interpretation was wrong, but instead of this, they very impudently changed the universally accepted conception of faith, Islam, Tauhid, Prophethood and the Hereafter in order to make these basic articles of the faith fit in with their interpretation of this verse. Thus, they turned all the teachings of the Quran upside down and tampered with its meaning without the least hesitation. Now let us consider their interpretation and point out its errors.

(1) Their interpretation contradicts the teachings of the Quran as a whole, for according to these virtue, piety and goodness do not comprise material progress and ability to rule over the land. Moreover, if the Quranic word Salih (virtuous, good) is regarded as synonymous with Sahib Salahiyyat (i.e. possessor of fitness and competence), this one verse will clash with the whole of the Quran.

(2) They isolate this verse from its context and ascribe to it whatever meaning they like; otherwise, they would have seen that the inheritance referred to in the context is the promise to the believers which is to be fulfilled in the Hereafter, and thus has nothing to do with inheritance in this world.

If this verse is interpreted in the context in which it occurs, it becomes very plain from the preceding verses that this promise to the righteous people holds good for the life in the Hereafter. This thing has been made more explicit in (Surah Az-Zumur, Ayats 73-74). According to this passage (which is definitely about life in the Hereafter), when the pious people will enter into Paradise, they will say: God be praised, Who has fulfilled His promise and made us heirs to the land.

Now let us consider this matter in the light of the Psalms (whether the Book of Psalms in the Bible is genuine or tampered with, because the real Psalms of Prophet David are nowhere available) to which this verse refers. According to 37:9-29: Evildoers shall be cut off: but those that wait upon the Lord, they shall inherit the earth. For yet a little while, and the wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be. But the meek shall inherit the earth; and shall delight themselves in the abundance of peace....and their inheritance shall be forever....The righteous shall inherit the land, and dwell therein forever. Thus the Psalms also confirm word for word (Verse 105). It is obvious that (They shall) dwell therein forever refers to the life in the Hereafter.

As regards to the inheritance of the earth in this worldly life, Allah gives it as a heritage to those of His servants whom He pleases (Surah Al-Anfaal, Ayat 128), irrespective of whether they are believers or disbelievers, righteous or wicked, not as a reward but for their trial. Your Lord will make you rulers on the earth, and then He will see how you conduct yourselves. (Surah Al-Anfal, Ayat 129). The heritage of the earth in this worldly life is neither permanent nor everlasting. It is merely bestowed as a trial for different communities. On the other hand, the heritage of the land referred to in (Verse 105) is permanent and forever and, according to the Quran, it will be bestowed on the basis of this formula: The land belongs to Allah and He will make only His righteous servants heirs to it not for their test but as a permanent reward for the righteous attitude they adopted in this worldly life.

وَمَآ اَرْسَلْنٰكَ اِلَّا رَحْمَةً لِّلْعٰلَمِيْنَ ١٠٧

(21-107) We have sent you forth as nothing but mercy to people of the whole world. (100)

(100) This verse can also be translated as: We have sent you only as a blessing for the people of the world. In both cases it will mean that the appointment of the Prophet (peace be upon him) is indeed a blessing and mercy of Allah to the whole world. This is because he aroused the neglectful world from its heedlessness and gave it the knowledge of the criterion between truth and falsehood, and warned it very clearly of both the ways of salvation and ruin. This fact has been stated here to tell the disbelievers of Makkah that they were quite wrong in their estimate of the Prophet (peace be upon him) that he was an affliction and distress for them because they said: This man has sown seeds of discard among our clans and separated near relatives from each other. They have been told here: O people, you are wrong to presume that he is an affliction for you; but he is in reality a blessing and mercy of Allah for you.

قُلْ اِنَّمَا يُوحٰۤى اِلَیَّ اَنَّمَاۤ اِلٰـهُكُمْ اِلٰهٌ وَّاحِدٌ فَهَلْ اَنْتُمْ مُّسْلِمُوْنَ ﴿۱۰۸﴾

(21-108) Say: "It is revealed to me that your God is only One God. Will you, then, submit to Him?"

فَاِنۡ تَوَلَّوۡا فَقُلۡ اٰذَنۡتُكُمۡ عَلٰى سَوَآءٍ ؕ وَ اِنۡ اَدۡرِىۡۤ اَقَرِيۡبٌ اَمۡ بَعِيۡدٌ مَّا تُوۡعَدُوۡنَ ۱۰۹

(21-109) If they turn away, say to them: "I have warned you all alike; and I cannot say whether what you have been promised (101) is near or distant.

(101) That is, I do not know the time and the form of the punishment of Allah for your rejection of the message. It may come at any time in any shape.

اِنَّهٗ يَعۡلَمُ الۡجَهۡرَ مِنَ الۡقَوۡلِ وَ يَعۡلَمُ مَا تَكۡتُمُوۡنَ ۱۱۰

(21-110) Indeed He knows what you say loudly and what you hide. (102)

(102) This refers to their secret schemes, plots and their whispering campaign which have been mentioned in (Verse 3). There, too, the Prophet (peace be upon him) had said: My Lord has the knowledge of everything that is said in the heavens or the earth for He is All-Hearing, All-Knowing. (Verse 4). This was to warn them that they would be taken to task for these things, too.

وَ اِنۡ اَدۡرِىۡ لَعَلَّهٗ فِتۡنَةٌ لَّكُمۡ وَ مَتَاعٌ اِلٰى حِيۡنٍ ۱۱۱

(21-111) I think that this [reprieve] is possibly a trial for you, an opportunity to enjoy yourselves until an appointed time."

(103) This was a trial because the delay in the punishment was deluding them into believing: All the things put forward by the Prophet are false. Had he been a true Prophet of Allah, we would have been punished long before this for our disbelief. They did not realize that the reason for the delay was that Allah willed to give them respite for mending their ways.

قٰلَ رَبِّ احۡكُمۡ بِالۡحَقِّ ؕ وَ رَبُّنَا الرَّحۡمٰنُ الۡمُسۡتَعَانُ عَلٰى مَا تَصِفُوۡنَ ۱۱۲

(21-112) The Messenger said: "My Lord! Judge with truth. Our Compassionate Lord alone is our support against your (blasphemous) utterances."